

# SMITH'S

SEPT. 1910

MAGAZINE

15 CENTS



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Monthly Publication issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 70-80 Seventh Avenue, New York City.  
ORMOND G. SMITH, President, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City; GEORGE C. SMITH, Secretary and Treasurer,  
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Entered as Second-class Matter, at the New York Post Office, according to an Act of  
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VOLUME II

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NUMBER 6

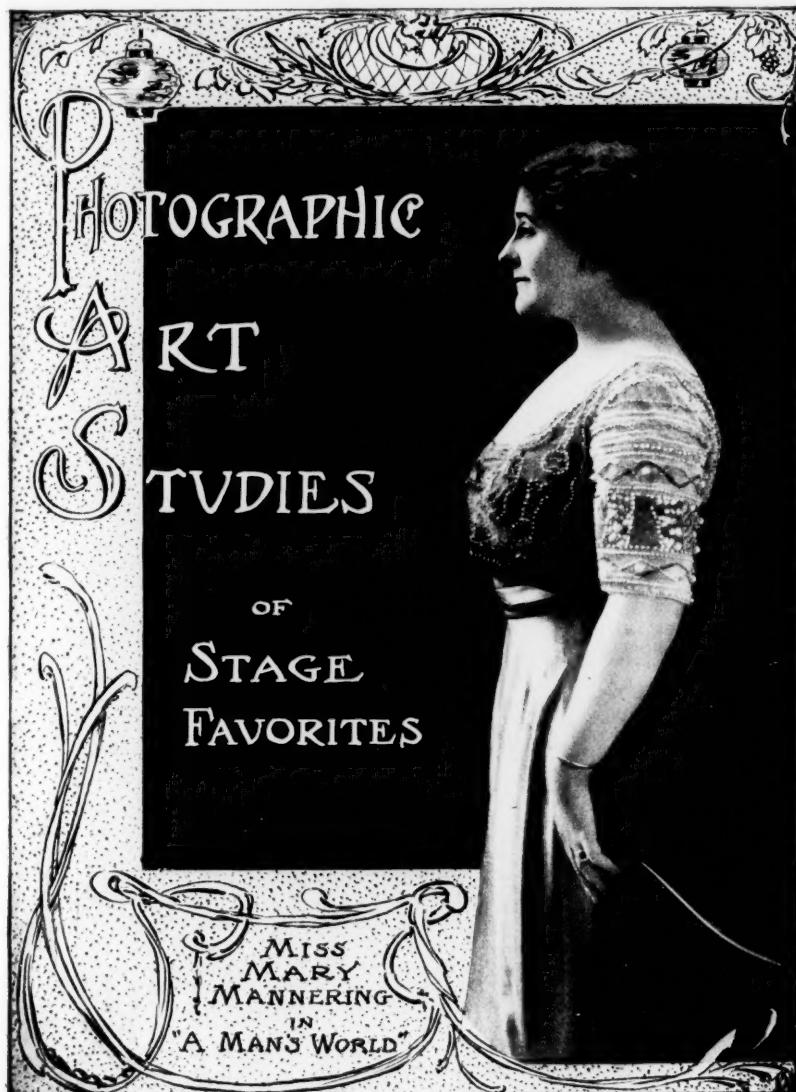




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In "A Matinee Idol"



# The PRISONER

By

## GRACE MARGARET GALLAHER

Author of  
"CONCERNING COMFORT,"  
"THE UNDERSTANDING HEART," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED  
BY R. LILLO

THE air had a thin, still cold that boded more snow; the leaden clouds were ironed out smooth across the sky and down to the edges of the hills, themselves gray patches, as if huge flakes from the skies had fallen on them and hardened suddenly; the sun was going without even one crimson or violet touch of good-by to the mournful countryside; over the far-stretching pastures the snow lay deep, its whiteness dead and unsparkling. In spite of its cheerful red barns, the old farmhouse under the bent of the hill added to this lonely winter world a human pathos. It reared its steep-pitched roof, gray like all around it, so far back from the country road as to be hidden from view and to catch the high tankle of sleighbells from it only far off and vague.

The girl just coming from the house to the well was halted by a sudden, new sense of her isolation. She swept her glance over Eagle Mountain, Three Hills, and the Back Woods, and shivered forlornly. Then her eyes caught

a stout blue twist of smoke curling up from some unseen chimney, and her quick laughter bubbled out.

"Ho, kitty-puss," she challenged the family cat following her sociably, "we ain't all stark, starin' lone, yet."

She plunged the bucket into the well, bending over to hear the gurgle of the water hurrying to fill it. A little shawl of faded plaid bound her shoulders, a narrow skirt of dun woolen clung limp about her; her garb was as dull-hued as that of the land, but she herself was vivid as a scarlet berry, with brilliant cheeks, shining eyes, and gypsy dark hair. Her small, nimble figure, quizzical little face, and remote laugh, untoward in a New England farmhouse, named her some denizen of the winter woodlands, pixie or fay, stolen from them on an impulse of helpfulness.

Suddenly, as if starting from a dream, she whirled the chain up from the well, and flitted, soft as a shadow, to the house, her bucket tilted at a slant that ever threatened ruin, yet ever escaped it.

The farmhouse kitchen, big and low, hummed with the homely pleasures of warmth and cooking supper.

"Comin' on for to snow 'gain, gran," she called, in just the light, gay voice expected from one of "the little people." "I'm real kind o' glad we got one neighbor, anyhow, so if anythin' should happen—"

An old woman, gaunt and white-headed, but hardy and with an eagle glance, raised herself from the lounge behind the stove.

"Ain't anythin' goin' to happen," she retorted, in a dominant voice.

"No, no," soothingly, "only I wish father and the boys would come home."

"You oughten to," still contradictorily, "when they got th' chance o' the season to cut logs up back on th' mountain." Her words died out in a smothering cough.

The girl ran to the stove for some pungent brew of herb tea, simmering there.

"You get some warm drink into you, gran, an' let me cover you up good," she urged, on her knees before the lounge.

The old woman lay back, limp and shaken, while hard red spots began to burn in her cheeks and a glitter to grow in her eyes. She watched her granddaughter, fluttering about in the dusk, from pantry to stove and from cellar to table, with the mixed emotions always produced in her by the latter's "shaller" methods of achieving worthy results.

"What you call a neighbor?" she asked suddenly, returning upon her trail after a disconcerting habit.

"Who is my neighbor?" murmured her granddaughter to herself whimsically.

"You ain't reckonin' that Rus Speer to be one, are you, Flip?" the old woman demanded, her voice rising shrilly.

"He lives next door, so as we could call to him," returned Philippa, with her usual soft air of detachment.

"That don't make any differ, he ain't a neighbor to me nor to your father, th' jailbird!" A fury of righteous contempt was in the word.

Philippa shuddered. Although she had never seen so much as a picture of a prison, her eager mind raised up a shape of dolor more grim, even, than the iron truth.

"Has he really been to jail, gran?"

"Two year, an' like 'nough that ain't th' worse o' him, if truth come to light, I'd rather perish right here under th' snow than take so much as a hand's turn o' help from one o' them."

"Well, I wouldn't," unaggressively. Then she mused a moment on the mysterious man living behind the knoll, concerning whom her family were so persistently silent.

"What did he do, gran?" with swift desire to probe the secret of his life.

"Killed a man."

"Oh!" gaspingly. "Did he have to?" Old Mrs. Welby reared herself up.

"Have to kill! Guess glad 'nough to."

"Why don't they hang him, then?"

"Plenty gets free that deserves th' rope," sternly, but in gentler tones, as she fell back. "Twas in some kind o' a brawl in a drinkin' place over to th' city. They claimed he hit out to save his life. What was he a-doin' there, I ask you?"

"He's steady 'nough now, gran."

"Bliged to be, I cal'late."

"An' he took care o' that poor sick brother o' his like he was a woman, I heard doctor tell father so."

"There's another o' that tribe, that George! Crawled home to die after livin' over to th' city like a— There, child, it ain't fitten you should hear o' such goin's on. You was too little a girl to mind th' times th' boys cleared out o' th' old place for town. Why, Rus here must be ten year older'n you, but I know th' whole breed o' from ol' squire, this man's grandsire, down. Good blood in 'em, best in th' country, but a drinkin', swearin', fightin', godless set as ever disgraced an honest community. Don't you ever so much as pass th' time o' day with that Russell, you hear, Philippa?" A fierce seizure of coughing beat back her granddaughter's words.

Worn out by the attack, she lay

panting, the red spreading ominously on her pale face.

"You git me to bed, Flip," she whispered. "I've got a pain like a knife shootin' through my chest, an' I feel poorly all over."

This was so unwonted an admission of the power of the flesh that Philippa thrilled to an instant alarm. But her spirit, lightly gallant always, rebounded, as she tucked her patient into bed in the kitchen bedroom, snug and warm by the chimney, and dosed her with more steaming tea, and saw her drop off to sleep. She ate her own supper, "redded up" the room, and ran out to see that "th' critturs" were all fended safe for the night. The threatened snowfall had begun, fine and thick, through the dusk. With the queer loneliness upon her, Philippa strained her eyes through the white mist for the signal that flew from her neighbor's chimney. She lighted both the kitchen and "th' foreroom" lamp, an extravagance she did not attempt to justify to herself, and sat down in the cheering radiance to some fine white work. The kind-voiced clock ticked off the minutes in the still room, the cat purred, and the kettle whispered warmly. The world within the old farmhouse was safe and cozy; yet Philippa fidgeted at her sewing, jumped at each buffet of the wind, and longed for her father.

Suddenly, her grandmother turned in bed. "Dan'l! Dan'l!" she called hoarsely.

The girl ran to her in alarm, for Daniel was her own grandfather, dead many a year.

"You come here, Dan'l," went on the painful voice. "I'm dreadful sick, an' my chest's all tore up with pains."

"Lie down, gran, dear, an' take this," comforted the girl.

"That you, Mary? Where's your father?"

"It's me, Flippie; Aunt Mary's over to the mills."

The old woman, heeding her not at all, now rambled on about matters long dead and gone, now cried out wildly with pain. Philippa, unskilled in sick-room lore, tried such feeble remedies

as her knowledge supplied and her courage dared. Presently the sick woman fell into another doze.

"What'll I do?" urged the girl to herself. "She'll wake up worse'n ever, I know. I got to have somebody, no matter who."

Swift to act as to decide, she snatched up a shawl, and darted out into the storm. The wind beat her back, the snow muffled her feet like swaths of wool, yet such was her urgency that she plowed down the lane in a run.

The Speer house, large and important by day, loomed to grand proportions in the night. From a side window the gleam of a lamp showed pleasantly. Scudding in the wind, Philippa flung herself bodily against the door, beating at it with her feet. It opened so without warning sound that she pitched forward into the house on her knees; her first contact with this neighbor who was no neighbor, was the very actual one of being lifted to her feet by him.

"Gran'mother's sick, an' I'm all alone," she whispered, the breath clean beaten out of her body.

"What ails her?" as brief as herself. "Out of her head an' a dreadful pain in her chest."

"Pneumonia," to himself. "You wait here a minute." He lifted her into a chair as if she were a doll. "I'll get somethin' good for that an' come right long with you."

He was gone with the lamp, leaving her to the warm darkness to recover her wits. When he returned, he had a roll of cloth, a bottle, and a tin can in his hands.

"All right," he said, and pushed her out before him into the night.

Around the corner of the house the storm swooped down upon them, battering light Philippa against her companion like some waft leaf.

"Rough night," the man said gently. She noticed, now, that his voice was deep, smooth. He shifted all his bundles to one arm and put the other around her waist with a strong grip. Into her anxious mind flashed a spark of humor at the situation as her family



*Her garb was as dull-hued as that of the land, but she herself was vivid as a scarlet berry.*

would have seen it, their daughter thus at commerce with one of the godless Speers; she herself thrilled, half in fear, half in excitement, to the touch of this criminal.

Old Mrs. Welby was calling pitifully for "Dan'el" when they opened the door. Russell dropped his coat and cap in one motion, and stepped into the bedroom.

"I'm here," he said, with soft indistinctness.

Instantly the sick woman was appeased by the man's voice.

"Oh, deary me, Dan," she com-

plained, but in calmer tones. "I've wanted you bad. I'm sufferin'."

He motioned for the lamp; in the light he felt her pulse and hot head with the assurance of a doctor. As she watched him, scared little Philippa revived; things weren't so bad, after all.

"We'll make her turpentine stoups; my mother did, an' I used 'em consider'ble for my brother. That'll get her clear o' th' pain, then I got a sleepin' potion to calm her down."

"I haven't any——"

"Right here in th' can I brought, an' th' cloths, too. I'll heat it." He began to stir the fire.

Philippa had darted into the cupboard for a spoon, when his voice halted her.

"Philippa," he called softly.

She stared, astounded; how did he know her name, and did he think her a little girl? She sent a

quick glance to her short skirt, and a hand to her braid of hair pulled down by the storm.

"Just give me some old spoon or other to stir this," he said unregardingly.

In swift silence they worked over her grandmother, until the steaming poultices began to loosen her sharp breathing and smooth the pain from her face. Then Russell dropped something into a spoon, which won her to sleep magically. They slipped out into the kitchen, and in the shaded lamplight sat down to watch. Now, for the first time, the

girl looked at her helper, seated in the rocker on the other side of the stove in as tranquil a companionship as if they were years-old friends. She saw a tall and strong man, powerfully but not clumsily built, with a shrewd, weathered face, from which deep-set, bright-blue eyes looked out good-temperedly. She was too young to note the hard lines about his mouth or to ask where he had learned that unflinching steadiness of gaze. This was not the front a sinner, disgraced and punished, should hold to a judging world, neither tragically submissive nor sullenly defiant; this was the sober pleasantness of a serious man, who was as kind as he was strong.

Suddenly she colored hot in the lamplight, for she perceived that he, on his side, studied her. He spoke at once, as if he would put her at her ease.

"She been sick long?" he asked, in the guarded whisper they both used, and drew his chair nearer. His voice had the slow, country accent, but his words showed the years in the city.

Philippa pulled her chair forward, too. Here was a man under the ban of the law, and the gospel! Her adventurer's heart leaped.

"She's been complainin' more'n a week, ever since father and the boys went up on th' mountain; but, then, gran ain't ever took sick, so I didn't make much of it."

"She'll be better by mornin'." And the girl believed his quiet reassurance. "You get lonesome off on th' Back Road here, sometimes?" gently.

"Oh, no, never!" with a bright shake of her gypsy head. Then her face crinkled with silent laughter. "Yes, I did, too, once, to-day, just at dark. It seemed like all th' folks in th' world was dead, 'twas so quiet an' dumb. I did want some neighbors, then I saw your chimney smoke——" She swept her small, brown hand in a gesture that seemed to speak of comfortable things.

The man smiled, for the first time, she realized, surprised.

"I'm real glad I could help you out. I learned consid'ble of doctorin' when I was a boy from my mother; she was

gifted that way, an' then I nursed my brother." He spoke as serenely as if his neighborly offices had often been requisitioned by the Welby family.

"You're wonderful," in a whispering thrill. "I'm as unhandy as a fish over it. Gran always does things like that. Gran an' father an' th' boys do *everythin'*, always, now I think o' it. I guess I'm dreadful kind o' childish." She offered this with her little air of gay unconcern, as if really another were under discussion.

Rus Speer's piercing eyes regarded her in his inscrutable way.

"You've got time 'nough ahead o' you for cares," bluntly.

Again Philippa colored, he did indeed think her a child.

"I'll be twenty next summer."

His smile made of twenty a young thing, indeed.

"Don't you wish 'twas summer, now?" catching at a new subject to hide her confusion.

"Do you?"

"I love it." Leaning forward close to him, she told him of her fellowship for the backwoods, the great meadows, the river.

He knew her woods and fields, too, and they whispered together in a strange intimacy while the old grandmother slept deeper and deeper and the clock hustled the minutes along.

The snap and plunge of a stick of wood in the stove made them turn, and Russell's eyes caught the clock's.

"Look here, now, Philippa, you better get right to bed. It ain't anyways probable your gran'mother'll wake till mornin', but I'll watch right here, an' if she does I'll call you straight off."

"Why shouldn't you be th' one to sleep, Mr. Speer?" She emphasized his title slightly.

"You got a day o' nursin' ahead o' you, an' I can sleep clock round if I'm a mind to. Come, now, ain't you got some warm room downstairs?"

"Father's chamber's right there."

"Well, you get into it, quick! I promise to call you if she wakes up," he answered, as if she had spoken.

All against her will, yet powerless to

resist, Philippa, still dressed, rolled herself in a comfort on the outside of the bed, and, with the door a-crack to hear every sound, closed her eyes for a minute.

She opened them suddenly upon a room bright with the red of a winter sunrise after the storm, and cheerful with the good savor of hot coffee. Through the crack she could see Russell Speer addressing himself to the case of breakfast with the same skill as he had put forth for her grandmother. Uncurling with the soft silence of some little animal leaving his burrow, she slipped into the kitchen.

"Gran?" she breathed.

"Never stirred once. Fever gone an' breath comin' natural." He gave his curiously, friendly look that was not yet a smile.

"Why didn't you call me?"

"No need to." His tone had a finality of authority about it, as if it might be her father's. "You kind o' freshen yourself up, and we'll have some breakfast."

The breakfast was as good as she could have cooked herself, Philippa conceded, pondering the big man opposite her, fitted rather for rifle or helm than housekeeping duties.

"I learned to cook when I came home to nurse my brother George," he said, just as if she had spoken. It was uncanny the way he caught her thoughts, unuttered. "Now, I'm a-goin' to fetch doc, you'll want him to see her, an' ain't there some good woman down to th' village you'd like should come stay with you?"

"Oh, if Aunt Marthy Bowen could come! She's a reg'lar nurse, an' gran sets by her. She's down to Deacon Caleb Marchant's, but I cal'late Mrs. Marchant's up an' 'round now. Bryce could fetch her up."

Scarlet flags flung themselves out in her cheeks, summoned by the new name.

"I'll go right 'long," answered, without a glance, this man who saw everything and nothing.

Philippa started forward and caught his hand in both hers; though it was

the blood-stained hand of a murderer, she felt no longer even excitement, only deep thanks.

"You've been real kind," vibrantly. "I ain't got words to tell you how I feel 'bout it—"

"I'm right there, if you want me any time." And, without violence, he had loosed himself and was gone.

The doctor was cheerfully sure of Mrs. Welby's recovery and strong in praises of Philippa's treatment; without a word of Russell or of the method of his own summoning, Philippa wondered how much he knew. Early in the afternoon a sleigh, jangling up to the kitchen door, tilted out upon the flags a broad and ruddy woman whose wholesome presence seemed to flaunt as with banners disease and disasters.

"Here I be, Flippie," she called in a big, wholesome voice. "I met doc an' he tol' me your gran'mother'd be bakin' bread in a couple o' days, but I piked right 'long, jest th' same." She made her way with ponderous swiftness toward the bedroom as she talked.

"Hello, Flip!" from the sleigh.

It was Bryce Marchant, a tall boy, movingly handsome in the finely cut, classic manner occasionally found in the young manhood of New England, and magnificently alight with health and spirits. The girl on the doorstep colored and glowed, laughing till she seemed all a-sparkle.

"Afternoon, Bryce," she called back;

"You jump in and drive 'round th' square with me," the young man urged, his voice as charming as his face. "You look kind o' peaked; do you good."

"Run 'long, child," answered for her Aunt Marthy. "I'll take care o' your gran'mother, now."

"Ain't this complete?" rejoiced the girl, as she tucked herself into the hollow by Bryce's side. "Gran gettin' better, Aunt Marthy to th' helm, an' you an' me goin' sleigh-ridin' together!"

The young man laughed, too, yet a little queerly. Philippa Welby always said things out so plain, different from other girls; it seems—well, sort o' forth putting. Philippa, as unconscious as she would have been uncomprehending

of this secret criticism, chattered like a squirrel in her delight.

The turn of the lane showed them the Speer house and Russell chopping wood by the shed. He raised his head and nodded in the impersonal greeting to a passer of all dwellers in lonely countrysides. Philippa nodded back cordially, and, unseen by Bryce, waved a gayly mitten hand to him.

"Know th'at fellow, Flippie?" curiously.

"He's th' only neighbor we got," with an unconcern that feigned reality.

"I guess you ain't heard 'bout him."

"Yes, I have, too. He's been in jail for murder."

"The dickens! Who tol' you that?"

"Don't everybody know it?"

"Oh, I cal'late so, but your folks was a-keepin' it from you. Queer 'bout Rus," mused the young fellow. "I used to go to school with him, he was one o' th' big boys when I was a little one an' I always took to him; big-hearted he was and 'fraid o' nothin' that grew, but awful fiery-spirited and lawless."

"He's a good man now," with soft insistence.

Bryce stared. "What you know 'bout him, anyhow?"

"Nothin', only I'm down sure he's good."

"Land!" Bryce stirred impatiently. Philippa Welby was capable of proposing the man in the moon for clerk of town meetin', she acted that scatterwitted sometimes. Then her little soft

face, a radiance of shining happiness, captivated him, and, bending swiftly, he kissed her.

"You look pretty as that 'gain, an' I'll do it all over!" he threatened, with humorous fondness.

She hid her tempter face against his shoulder; they were lovers since they had shared the same primer at school, but tokens of the bond were rare.

"How's the farm, Bryce?" shifting the subject.

"Hang it!" His handsome face clouded sullenly. "I tell you there ain't enough to it to keep father, mother, and the young ones, an' me. I got to clear out some place an' start on my own hook."

"What'd your father do?"

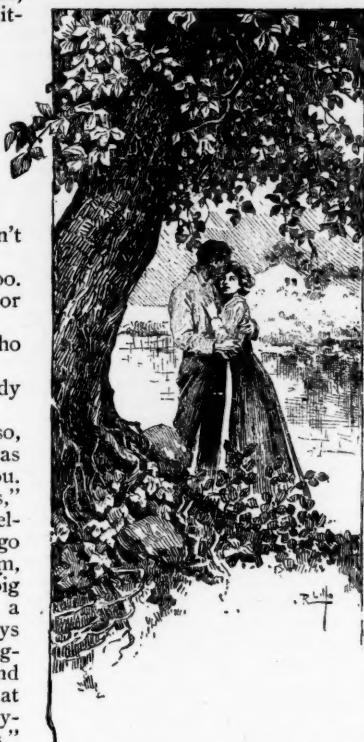
"Farm it 'lone, I guess, same as he did 'fore I was born. It's a dog's life for work, Flip, an' nothin' to show for it. I don't wonder all the Speer boys run off to th' city 'stead o' grindin' out their lives on a farm. I'll go to the city, too!"

"You wait, Bryce, you're young enough yet." The mention of the Speers had raised shuddering pictures of the city.

"Twenty-one, an' that's a man," he retorted, looking all angry boy. "Dull as th' doldrums, too, th' country is. I want to see things an' folks outside in th' world!"

"Oh, you will," soothingly. Then, after her fashion of slipping away from hard things: "What's the news to Pettipaug?"

While they journeyed, to the enliven-



*He caught her in his arms, and kissed her with a panting fervor.*

ing clink of bells, around the dark woods that formed the square, the lovers joked and gossiped and teased one another, and were entirely happy, in spite of sickness and poverty.

The year wore away in the pleasant monotony customary to Philippa's days, unmarked by any outstanding event; nevertheless, she felt, through all her little world, changes, subtle, hard to catch, that yet troubled her mightily. One was in her new commerce—it could not be called intimacy—with her banned neighbor, Russell Speer. Before the night of his rescue, she seemed never to have seen him, save as a looming figure of mystery away across some pasture or far down the lane. Now he crossed her path continually, by his own gate, or on the short cuts over the hills. They never stopped to talk, their greetings were a nod and smile or word about the season; yet a warmth of interest glowed kindly in the girl's heart for this outcast. Once in a misty, pale day of early spring, meeting her over the Black Hills, he gave her a little bunch of wind anemones. She could not tell if he had picked them for her especially, but she cherished them in water.

Far more moving, however, than her touch upon the wreck of the old squire's family, was her altering relation to Bryce Marchant. Their affection for each other, deep-rooted in the most ancient memories of her childhood, had been always a fact of daily living, sweet and bright, like the sunshine or the shining river, as safe and sure as they, and no more pondered upon. Some day Bryce and she would live together in a little house of their own, and she would fend for him, and he would tell her all the ways of his farming, but these pictures of the future had no sharper outlines than a child's pretty dream of a castle in fairyland and a Prince Charming to carry her there. Without her will, this dear content was changing into a joyous excitement that troubled while it enchanted her. Bryce was no longer just—Bryce; every day he grew more compellingly a lover. Her little feet tripping lightly in an elfish land of

pretty, many-colored unrealities, were drawn irresistibly by him into a world of stressful human actualities.

One day, late in spring, when the early wheat was gladly green on the uplands and the air keen with the fresher from the far north, Philippa was coming home from the village, across lots. In the open meadow behind the Marchant farm she saw Bryce wave to her. They often met here, for the Welbys discouraged, in mild but effective fashion, his suit. As Philippa waited, she noted, with a new feeling for it, his lithe, straight carriage, and the refinement of figure his shabby clothes and earth stains could not hide. He caught her in his arms, and kissed her with a panting fervor that gave her that excited thrill, unknown of old.

"Let's sit down behind this rock," he urged. "It's warm in th' sun, and I got somethin' to tell you."

Then, breathlessly, holding her hand hard clasped, he began: "I'm goin', Flip, day after to-morrow!"

"Goin' where, Bryce?"

"To th' city!"

"Oh, Bryce!" That was all, and her big eyes wide upon him.

"It's got to be, Flippie, don't you cry," although, indeed, her eyes were dry of tears; "I had it out with father. He saw just how 'twas; th' farm can't support 'nother grown man. I'm only a drain onto it. So father, he stirred himself; he's got a cousin over to the city, an' he wrote him, an' th' cousin he stirred himself— Oh, well, it comes out to this," the boy hurried on, impatient of the details of explanation, "I got a place in an office."

"An office!" breathed Philippa. If he had said an ambassadorship she could not have been more amazed.

"Tain't much to begin, of course." Even in his triumph, Bryce hoisted no false colors. "But it's a starter. An', if I can prove to 'em I'm th' sort they want, we'll be married in a year."

"Oh!" The girl felt as if she were on the roof of the world, beaten upon by all the winds of heaven.

"Why not?" He laughed unsteadily. "Ain't that th' way things have

been a-pointin' long back a good five years now?"

"Don't go away, Bryce," she quivered out, her free hand pressed against his breast.

"I tell you I *got to!* I'd never get 'nough to buy my own shoes, let lone my wife's!" He spoke in a sudden fierceness of impatience at her impracticality.

Philippa shrank at that name, like a sensitive leaf curling at an alien touch. "I'll miss you so!" she whispered childishly.

The appeal reached his heart deeply. His soft, dark eyes clouded with boyish tears; in a choked silence he held her close in his arms.

"I *got to go*," he repeated, but this time in tenderness. "I'll come home sometimes, Flippie; th' city ain't so terrible far off, an' we'll write a great, long letter once a week."

"Yes, dear," in a weak murmur, her wet cheek pressed against his; she was trying to fashion a world in which there was no Bryce, and found it a dreary dwelling place.

"You want I should go see your father 'fore I leave?"

"Oh, I don't know," still in vague misery.

"I cal'late he won't shed *many* tears to get shut o' me." The mention of Philippa's father had roused his spirits again; he laughed defiantly.

"He ain't got anythin' gain you," she forced together her bewildered wits to say, "'cept you ain't forehandad yet, an'—"

"An' I'm my father's son."

"He ain't got anythin' gain your father 'cept—some—some business dealin'." Her voice trailed away as she heard in memory her father's stern tones branding Albert Marchant "a shifty man that no one can tie to."

"Tain't 'bout business, Flip, it's 'bout my father an' your mother." An honest blush spread redly over his face.

Philippa drew herself out of the circle of his arms to fix him with her questioning eyes.

"They kep' comp'ny for years, same

as you an' me," he went on shamefacedly. "They was tokened an' all like that, though th' banns wasn't out yet. Then my mother, she was Arletty Sill, moved into town. She didn't know a whisper 'bout him an' your mother; she lived out Kellin'worth way, an' she didn't get to see folks much, an'—an' father, he never tol' her." The boy stopped dead. When he went on his voice had hardened. "Oh, it's a bad business, Flip, I ain't never felt th' same toward father since Uncle Ezry Sill tol' me a year 'go, but mother hadn't any part at all in it. She was consid'ble pretty in th' face, an' had 'tractive ways with her, I guess," Bryce went on moderately, for he knew he was his mother's replica in face and fashion, "an'—well—"

"Mother an' him quarreled an' didn't wed," helped out Philippa.

"No, that wasn't th' way of it," he said in a low voice. "Father reg'larly jilted her, he up an' tol' her he didn't want to wed her. He married mother a month after. It pretty near killed your mother, Uncle Ezry said. She took to her bed for weeks. Your father, he'd always set by your mother an' he began to court her 'gain—"

"She was happy with father, don't you think?" Philippa mused, trying to couple the merry little mother wavering faintly out of the mists of childhood with this heavy tragedy.

"Yes, yes, of course she was," testily, "but that don't make your father feel any more forgivin' toward my father."

Philippa crept up upon her knees, her face turned up to an ugly cloud that suddenly shut away the sunshine; life seemed as forlorn as the day, pledges shattered, lovers torn apart. "I'd better be steppin'," she said drearily.

"Don't you want to know what I'm agoin' to do or how I'll live, or anythin'?" in hurt wonder.

"Oh, yes, tell me." She sank back to his side. She did not really care, being one of those to whom the person himself is all in all, his works and ways very little, but she listened with touching care to every word Bryce gave her. These might well be the last notes of his voice she should ever hear, for what



*"Philippa, you want to leave th' place you was bred in an' all your kin, an' go to the city 'long o' him?"*

might not the unknown city hold for him of disaster, even ruin?

At the fence corner, just out of sight of the road, they parted, Bryce kissing her again and again passionately.

"It's tougher'n ever I thought it could be, sayin' good-by to you," he cried, straining his arms hard about her.

Philippa divined inner meanings; he longed to go, his heart leaped joyfully to the strange, far-away city, 'twas only the wrench of the parting moment that hurt him. A great loneliness welled

up out of her heart and chilled her like a cold dew.

"Good-by, dear Bryce," she said, with steadfast tenderness, her dark eyes raised to his dark ones, so like, so different, his soft and shadowy, hers clear and lambent. She kissed him, the first kiss she herself had ever given him, light and quick as a breath, and ran, without a backward glance, down the road.

Philippa grieved for Bryce truly those spring days, for she loved him

with all her sweet, light heart, yet she was, in the deep of her, a dryad, a faun, a creature of dew and air and sun, whose mortal sorrows could mark but not mar. How could she mourn long while all the world was a perfumed picture of bloom and the homestead thrilled to a jubilee of new life, of downy chick and ducklets, frisky calf and colt?

Every week Bryce wrote her a long, ardent letter, aglow with moving adventures by flood and field, for he had a gift for the written word. They charmed her like travelers' tales, yet puzzled her with their absorption in scenes and people who were all as a dream to her. Each week she sent back her faithful answer, brief, stiff, constrained, with not a breath of her gentle yearning to vitalize them.

In the middle of summer Bryce made a sudden visit, which left her more loving and more puzzled than ever. Strange to her was the elegance of his city clothes, stranger still his days of breathless activity in and out of crowds and his nights of gayety with "the fellows." But he was well and vibrantly happy, and that contented her. She wished he were not so eager to be rich and to take her away from all her dear pleasant haunts to the city where she knew she should stifle and wither away. Why couldn't he be satisfied to live along happily as they once did, sharing the delights of the changing year in a fellowship of spirit? However, the real change was still years away, she comforted herself in her dreaming way.

The splendid moon of August swung wide in a silent black sky and bewitched the common world of lane and hill and pasture with an unreality of marvelous beauty. Philippa, wandering by herself in the lane, was caught up into an ecstasy of delight. Her feet felt as if tipped with gauzy wings atilt to float her over the heads of the flowers. Nothing in her cheerful yesterdays or confident to-morrows had any voice for her in the enchanted silence of this wonderful present. She hardly started when her name sounded in gen-

tle tones behind her; all dreams came true this night.

"How'd you get here, Bryce?" without amazement.

"Flew," laughed the boy excitedly, as if he, also, "had drunk the dew of Paradise."

"Let's sit in the hay, like we used to, it smells so pretty. I got a lot to tell you."

Very gently they crossed the low wall into the mowing, and seated themselves against a great cock of hay. In spite of his words the boy did not open his news at once, but sat stroking Philippa's little brown hands as if he mused.

"You look kind o' like a spirit or a fairy, in that white dress, when I came up the lane," he said unsteadily, "like as if when I took hold o' you my fingers'd go clear through you."

"Does that feel real?" She pinched his fingers smartly.

"Stop that!" He caught both her hands safe in his. "Say, Flip, I got promoted yesterday."

Philippa clapped her imprisoned hands at his tone.

"The man above me died an' th' man above him moved West, an' I'm raised right up, two notches. Luck, I tell you! Now, will we be married?"

"No!"

"Yes, we will, too." He dropped her hands to shake her by her slim shoulder. "You get your weddin' duds together an' we'll have th' banns read out first time Sunday. 'Twill be complete."

Philippa swayed in his hot grasp.

"I—can't—go—to th' city, Bryce," faintly.

"Th' city's an a'mighty nice place, I'll tell you that, Flip Welby. I don't know how I ever lived as long as I did out of it. I didn't know I could set so by any place. Why, a day there is worth a whole month here."

"But to be married!" breathed the girl, always elusive to argument.

"I don't cal'late that's a fire new idea to you, is it?" he retorted. "It ain't to other folks, anyhow. Father an' mother know we're tokened. I tol' 'em my-

self. An' just 'bout everybody else 'round here does, too. Th' stage driver from th' Summit asked me to-night 'how my gal was.' You gone too far to back out now, miss." He laughed tremulously. "You don't want to change your mind, do you?"

His face, close to hers, was flushed and troubled, his voice leaped brokenly in his anxiety.

"No, Bryce, I like you just the same way I always did," with sweet and gentle loyalty.

"That's all right then!" He pressed his cheek down on her soft hair. "I ain't ever seen a girl could touch you for looks nor goodness. You goin' to wed me in a month?"

His arms were around her, his breath on her cheek, his alluring voice in her ear.

"Yes," faintly, but steadily.

"We'll go see your father." He pulled her to her feet.

Bewildered by the rush of events and urged beyond power of resistance, Philippa pattered beside young Marchant up to the house where Grandma Welby knitted in the dark doorway and Captain John inside by the lamp read the county paper.

"That one o' th' boys come home to bed?" called out the old woman, though she knew it was not.

"It's Bryce Marchant, gran; he wants to speak with father."

At his name, Cap'n John raised his fine head, and strong, clear glance like his mother's. He greeted his visitor by rising and offering a chair, but by no words. They made a strange contrast, on each side of the table, 'neath the dim lamp, the boy lithe, slender, and excited, the man solid, calm, and grave.

"I guess you know my business with you, Mr. Welby," Bryce began huskily. "I want to talk 'bout my affairs some."

Cap'n John's eagle look did not waver. The other stumbled on. "I've been in th' city workin', an' I like my place, an' I cal'late they like me because yesterday they gave me a raise, a new place an' more pay, good pay, too."

The stern eyes seemed to ask: "What is that to me?"

"Philippa an' me—well, we've always set by each other a sight, I guess you know 'bout that." He moistened his lips; nothing in his experience had been as hard as getting it over with this grim man. "An—we set by each other still an'—well, sir, may I have her?"

It was not at all as he could have wished to have it done, with dignity, as man to man, but at least 'twas said.

Cap'n John's deep, slow voice boomed ominously after the other's flurried speech.

"You think you'll care for my girl right 'long?"

The other's face flared angrily; he chose to read hidden meanings. "I know what's behind that, sir," he retorted, master of himself now in his rage, "but it ain't like that. I want to marry her in a month!"

"There's things belongin' to your family I would willin'ly forget, young man," answered the other, with unmoved quiet, "but it would be unjust to cast them up again' you. From all I hear you have a character for industry an' sobriety——"

"I've made my way up in th' city in less'n half a year," with eagerness.

"How old are you?" unregardingly.

"Twenty-two come 'lection time."

"Young, young! How much you gettin' to that city place?"

Bryce named his weekly salary with pride.

Cap'n John shook his head. "It ain't much in the city where prices is higher'n we'd believe, I'm told. Philippa," turning to the girl where she stood in the shadow, "you want to leave th' place you was bred in an' all your kin an' go on to th' city 'long o' him?"

There murmured in the girl's brain: "And for this cause a man shall leave father and mother and kindred." She ran to her father and put her arms around his neck, leaning her head against his breast; all the world, even old Mrs. Welby, feared this quiet man except his little daughter.

"Yes, father," she whispered.

Her father sighed. "It ain't my

choice for her," he said, without resentment, "but if it's hers for herself, I'll say naught. I give my word. You'll have to wait a year."

"A year!" The young man leaped in his chair.

"A year. You're young an' she's young. You'll work to your trade whatever it may be over to th' city, an' if you're of the same mind a year come next August you can have my little girl—if you're of th' same mind, I say."

Bryce was on his feet. "Why shouldn't I be of th' same mind?" he cried threateningly. "Ain't I been goin' with her, an' just her, since I was that high? You don't trust me—you've got th' idea I'll go back on her—you—you want to affront me!"

"No," said the other peaceably, "I don't mistrust you nor affront you. I just don't want you to have my girl while you're such green wood. Why, you've showed yourself off right now, how young you be, flarin' up at a word. If you set so by Philippa the year ain't none too long to serve for her."

"But you can't see it, sir," pleadingly now. "I shan't be able to come over to Pettipaug maybe for a whole year, for I've got to stick close to business. I could get off to wed, but that's all, an' you forcin' two people, that set by each other an' might wed an' be contented an' pleased a whole year, to be pulled apart an' all tore up in their feelin's. It ain't right, sir!"

"You can have her in a year," immovably.

"I want her *now!*" And again he poured out his arguments and entreaties.

When he paused, breathless, the man answered with iron calm: "I've said my say."

Philippa plucked her lover's sleeve; she knew the metal of her father's will. "It ain't any use," she whispered.

"You say somethin', Flip! You try to turn him," cried the young man fiercely.

Philippa locked and unlocked her fingers dumbly. She swayed on her light feet in miserable doubt. The importunity of Bryce's wooing stirred her

terribly. He loved her like that! She went to her father again, standing in front of him this time.

"He is true, father," she said, and tears fluttered on her lashes. "Bryce is honest an' faithful. He does want me now. You let me go. Please, father! He feels it so hard."

"An' you?" sharply. Then he took her small face between his large hands. "She ain't growed up yet," with a sudden tender softening to his slender daughter in her white dress. "She's just a child. Bryce, I ain't doin' this out o' hardness"—it was the first time he had used the man's name—"it's for th' best. She'll be took care of here an' looked out for an' kep' safe for you, my Philippa will."

Philippa followed her lover out into the lane. She slipped her hand into his and sought through her own tears to comfort him.

"Tain't long, dearie, a year," she murmured, "twill go by in no time."

"It's long 'nough for anythin' to happen to a man to—to—forget, to make a fool of himself!" he cried back at her strangely. "I tell you he mistrusts me 'count o' my father. Don't he see he's pushin' me to th' very thing he's afraid of? Forcin' me to wait a year!"

"Why, Bryce, you ain't afraid yourself?" wonderingly.

The man crushed her into his arms. "Afraid I'll get over settin' such store by you, you sweet little butterfly of a creature!" he cried thickly, and kissed her till she hid her face, shrinking from him. "An' I'll marry you, too, this month, like I said. I vow I will!"

He lifted her over the fence into the hayfield again. "Listen, dear, an' don't get all of a tremble till you hear me through. I want you right now, I can't wait a year. I want you to come to the city an' wed me right away."

And in the wondrous moonlight of that soft summer night, when all the laws and customs of the day's round were as if buried deep in the sea forever, her lover by every accent and every word of charm within his power urged, and the girl listened; and at last she yielded.



*"He's at the tavern," she told herself on the bare platform.*

"How'll I do it?" she asked wearily, beaten down to his will.

"Next week Tuesday you make some excuse an' you get a chance to go over to th' Summit by noon an' go straight to th' tavern—folks from Pettipaug don't visit it—an' tell 'em you want to wait for a friend. I'll come over soon as my train from th' city gets in; we'll start right back to th' city, get there in th' evenin', an' be wed. I'll have th' minister an' th' license all fixed. You won't back out now?" shaking her a little in his grasp.

"No."

"You promise to be there?"

"Yes."

"Say so! Say: 'Bryce, I give you my word I'll be there!'"

Philippa looked at him piteously, her small face flushed with tears, her lips parted with a sob, but she repeated like a dutiful child: "Bryce, I give you my word I'll be there."

All his hot urgency dropped from him. "You do care 'bout me more'n all the others, don't you, dear?" he asked very gently, not touching her at all, but looking down into her eyes.

"Yes, Bryce, I do love you most," she answered him back, the great word

coming steadfastly from her lips, her eyes bravely raised to his.

"That's all right, then," he answered and was gone without one word more.

The whole week passed as a dream, neither happy nor wretched; no conflict tore Philippa, nor did her disobedience and recklessness shame her. All powers of mind and spirit were fused in the fire of her pledge to an ore of fidelity. By and by she would suffer, she felt—little as she understood what suffering meant—perhaps for always, now she had just to plan her share of the business. Chance played into her hands smoothly. She heard in the village that the doctor was driving over to Summit upon her day to see his sister and coming back the next. She could ask to go on a shopping trip, spending the night with a cousin who lived at the Summit. She could pack her best dress in the bag and no questions asked. Nothing remained but to get her father's consent to a day's shopping at the Summit and a night with the old cousin. Captain John was surprised at her request; his daughter seldom cared to go to this town, eight miles away, and even to his masculine mind, it appeared a queer season for

tradin', but his heart was especially soft just now to his little girl who since the rebuff of her suitor had been sober and still, so he said yes, and gave her a present to buy herself "some trade or other."

The Summit lay steaming in an intolerable dog-day heat, damp and sunless, when the doctor's buggy dropped Philippa and her bag in front of the post office. She looked after him, and thought with a great relief that now she was alone and need no more make lively conversation nor invent excuses why he should not drive her directly to her cousin's. She had left no message at home; that she could send back after the marriage. She had written no word to the cousin who was accustomed to have her relatives drop in upon her suddenly. She dragged her bag over to the tavern near the station and sat down to wait in its small parlor.

The strained calm of the week was breaking down into a hot excitement; her feet twitched on the floor, her hands fidgeted from object to object. The noon train thundered in from the city. She waited in a tense expectancy. Bryce did not come. The hour they should have taken the train back passed, and still no sign from him. A terror of misunderstanding gripped her. What had he said that strange night? Was he to come to the Summit for her or had it been she that was to go to the city to him? Suppose he were waiting there, expectant and terrified, as she was?

She sprang up, seized her heavy bag, and hurried across to the station. There was no other train to the city till seven o'clock. It arrived there about ten. She went back to the tavern; perhaps there was some way or some train the man at the station did not know about by which Bryce might reach her. The little parlor was as empty as ever. She sat down again to wait, careless that she had eaten nothing since her breakfast at sunrise. She grew quieter in the certainty that the plan had been for her to go on to the city. She would find Bryce awaiting her there.

Philippa had never been on a train

in her life without her father, and not Columbus when he launched his caravel had a more sundered pang than the small, quiet girl who placed herself, stiff and straight, in the first seat in the car. The train ran through a pleasant farming land like her father's fields, but she would not look at it and was glad when night shut it out from her.

A broken wheel delayed the train so that it was midnight when it reached the city. The huge station, the flaming lights, the hurrying people, the noise and clamor were terrible in their strangeness to the country girl. She clung to her seat till every other passenger had gone, then in numbness of fright left the train, followed the people into the waiting room, and walked about it. Bryce was not there!

She felt queer and sick, all the blood in her body seemed pouring into her throat in clots which nauseated her as she swallowed them down. She trembled so she sank into a seat. Where was Bryce? Dead, drowned in the black water of the harbor, trampled under horses' hoofs in the streets? Every shape of horror surged before her. By and by, the racing blood in her veins stilled, her knees grew steady. Bryce had meant to go to the Summit, had missed his train, had taken one that had passed hers on the road. Oh, why had she been so wild as to leave the tavern? She must get back at once! Forcing her courage to it she asked an official for the next train. Six o'clock in the morning. She must sit there for nearly six hours.

Forever after Philippa doggedly forced her mind away from the memory of that night, the empty station, the clang of the trains crashing into the stillness shockingly, the people who stared at her as they hurried for trains, policemen who asked her where she came from, the man who kept returning to her with insinuating trials at acquaintance, the dead night air, the crawling pace of the hours. But though her will refused to ponder them the dreariness of them was in the circulation of her blood as long as she lived.

Just before the train left she saw a

man go to a counter and begin to eat and the knowledge awoke in her that she had taken nothing in twenty-four hours. She timidly approached the waiter and asked for coffee. Its heat and strength heartened her to get some food.

Her spirit, terrified and exhausted by suspense and loneliness, grew warm within her as the train pulled into the Summit. This was almost home and Bryce was there. She hurried as fast as her tired feet could take her out of the train. "He's at the tavern," she told herself on the bare platform, and quickened her feet along the road.

She sat down in the parlor, not because she wished to stay—she hated every corner in it—but because she had come to the end. Bryce was not there. Where else could she go? She puzzled out the figure in the carpet, then she followed the vine on the wall paper all around the room and out the door. After that she counted the threads in the table cover in front of her. She had no thoughts in her head, or emotions in her breast. The landlady opened the door.

"Was you Miss Philippa Welby?" she asked. "Here's a letter come last night for you after you was gone." She was a dull woman, who was not even curious.

Philippa took the letter and waited till the landlady had gone to read it. It ran:

DEAR PHILIPPA: I can't go through with it. There ain't another girl in it. I like you more than any girl I'll ever meet. But I want to be a free man, I want to go and come as I've a mind to, here in the city. I don't want any wife to hold me down or tie me back. I know I'm a hound and I ought to be kicked. I hate and despise myself. You're well rid of such a fellow, Philippa. I've felt this growing in me ever since I come here. The city's got hold of me. I can't think of anything else. But I've tried hard to be faithful and keep my word, that's why I begged and pleaded with your father. I didn't put any confidence in myself. You see why I fixed up this running-away business that no honest man'd ask of his wife. I wanted to put myself so's I couldn't creep out. It's all no use. I'd be turned against you if I did it. I do set by you, but not enough for that. Maybe

you can forgive me, Flippie, you've got such a sweet spirit.

BRYCE MARCHANT.

Philippa said very low: "My mother!" Then in a whisper: "But she didn't follow Alfred Marchant away to the city to wed him!"

She walked out of the tavern and down the road toward some woods she remembered. She was no longer weary, she ran as if hunted. At every step terrible sobs wrenching her body and tears drenched her face. The road was lonely and no one passed her. Deep in the woods she came upon an old watering trough, moss-covered, filled to the brim with cool water. She wondered if she could drown herself in it, she was so small. She sank down beside it, and, resting her hot face against the damp moss, wept in utter violence. All the depths of her summer sea were broken up; this humble little farmland Undine had found her soul.

"Whoa, there, Bob, what ails you?"

Philippa leaped up at the voice, straight into the faces of two horses who snorted and reared. Lost in her own misery, she had not heard a wagon approach. She sprang one side, caught at a hanging bough and swayed perilously. The driver of the wagon jumped down to her where she stood, hatless, her hair wildly fallen, her clothes stained, her face blurred with tears, and quietly lifted her into his wagon seat.

"It's Russell Speer," he said as if that explained everything.

He turned his horses down a leafy cart track.

"It's quiet here, and folks don't use it," he again explained, as the horses walked heavily along. "I've been over to Mountain Mills after grain and took this road home. Powerful pretty road 'tis," he talked on pleasantly.

Philippa turned her bleared eyes to him. One decision she had made even now, no one should ever know there had been any bond between her and Bryce. No one should say: "Poor girl, her mother was jilted, too, an' by his father." She'd run away, away, some place, any place where she was never heard of, and there she'd hide.



*"It's quiet here, and folks don't use it. Powerful pretty road 'tis," he talked on pleasantly.*

She had no clear idea of any act to come; only this she knew before the deep silence of a secret life or of the grave itself closed over her, she *must* speak. And to whom better than to this man, in the world, but not of it, acquainted with grief, wonted to sins?

"I came over to th' Summit to wed Bryce Marchant," she said thickly, "but he don't prize me any more. Read his letter!" She thrust it out to him.

The man shook his head. "Guess I won't," he answered, still in his kindly, noncommittal voice.

"He says there ain't another girl. He says he just wants to be free." She began to sob again dreadfully.

He took her hand compellingly.

"You tell me," he urged.

At first with struggling gasps, then in clearer tones as talking scorched dry her tears, she told him all her story from the days when her mother and his father were lovers. Russell listened without a word, his hand holding hers, and the horses, unnoticed, cropped the grass, and the sunshine drifted down through the trees.

"An' I've given up my home for him an' now I haven't him an' I've no place

to go, less it's the river," she ended in a poignant cry of shame and terror,

"You haven't got him, that's sure," returned the man, with no comment beyond the tone of his voice, "but your home's right over to th' Back Road same as it always was, an' I'll take you to it soon as ever you feel so as you can travel."

"I can't go back!" wildly. "I ran away, an' I went to him, an' they won't want me. I'm not the same I was."

"You ain't the same," he said, answering her last word first. He gathered both her hands in his. "Poor little girl, poor little child!"

It seemed to Philippa she had never dreamed of such tenderness as beat in his deep voice. She leaned against his shoulder, for she was weary beyond any fatigue she had ever known.

"But as for not goin' home, and they not wantin' you"—he spoke now in a kind, commonplace sort of tone that soothed her tired brain—"they'll welcome you like you'd been gone a month. Why, child, your father an' brothers worship th' ground you walk on."

"I ran away to wed him."

"Well, now, they don't know it, do

they? An' how they goin' to find out ever? You say you stayed to th' tavern 'stead o' goin' to that cousin's. Say you wanted to; just face it out; you can if you're drove to it. He ain't been over at th' Summit, there won't anybody tie your names together."

"Ought I? Is it right?" tremblingly, as hope dawned faintly before her.

"Oh, my Lord! There ain't anything else to do! 'Course it's right an' proper and duty an' th' law an' th' gospel. You don't want to kill your father, do you?"

"Poor father!" piteously.

He sent his keen look through her.

"You're beat to a finish," quietly. Then to himself: "There's no great clamor for grain over to my house, my folks won't notice if I don't bring it back. Philippa, you climb right off down onto those grain sacks and make you a bed and sleep in it. This's as likely a place for a nap here at th' end o' this lane as you'd find. I'll keep watch an' take you back to th' Summit in time to get some trade or other to show your folks, an' to catch th' doctor's buggy back. Come now, you sleep for me once before an' it turned out good, you try it this time."

As docile as a child the tired girl crept onto the wagon floor and stretched herself out on the sacks. Amazement, shame, misery, all powers were drowned in thick weariness. She slept like a baby, sighing and crying out sometimes, but never waking. The man kept watch over her, now regarding her with a hard frown as if her faithless lover were in his thoughts, now with almost a mother's tenderness as her little pitiful face softened him.

In the strange calmness Russell Speer seemed to carry around him, Philippa managed the rest of her day, even to calling upon the cousin and finding her away for a week thus making her own story of the tavern genuine. At the post office, Russell left her to wait for the doctor.

"Keep up your courage," he said to her. "Don't think of anything but just your father an' how you can make him happy."

Philippa, haggard and dim, but herself now, gave him back a look from her poor dulled eyes that lighted an instant's flash in them.

"I'll try!" in a voice that shook only a little.

The next two days Philippa lay ill with a beating headache that was not feigned. In her narrow bed, pulled out by the pointed window for air, she drowsed and dreamed, nor could she tell phantoms from realities—now it was her poor little scorned mother, at rest in her grave long years ago, she pitied; now Russell Speer, pent up in prison; now a shamed, trembling little figure huddled in the station; now a girl flying frantic through the green country lane.

The second day as her thoughts grew keener, remorse tormented her. Her pretty ways had been so innocently good that this "first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree" wrought upon her in scarlet colors. All her quickened spirit quivered as she thought of her headlong pursuit of her lover and the passion of longing that had gripped her on that desperate trip. Her room grew intolerable; she must out. If she could only tell her thoughts to some one, 'twould be like casting out devils. She could go to Rus Speer. He, too, was a sinner and would neither comfort nor condemn, but understand.

It smote her with amazement to find how light and nimble her feet went for all their heavy burden, and how clear her voice sounded when her father greeted her.

"Feeelin' some lik'lier, daughter?" Cap'n John asked, welcoming her with the smile he gave her alone.

The girl hid her head in his arms.

"Dear father, I do set by you more'n all th' world!" she murmured in accents that stirred even his steady blood.

"There! There I'll stroking her soft hair the wrong way with his rough hand. "You're my little girl, Flippie, you ain't growed up yet to me."

"I want always to be your little girl, father," she whispered back, smiling at him with the sorrowful woman knowledge he mustn't guess. "I'm agoin'

down the lane a piece to get th' air; 'twill feel good."

She watched him join her brother at the North Mowing and saw her grandmother safe over some household task. Then she slipped away to Russell Speer. Hope told her he would be there; and there he was, smoking his pipe on the back steps.

"I come to thank you," she said, without other greeting.

The man smiled without words and motioned her to a seat on the stone horse block opposite.

"I guess you saved my life that day," she went on, her voice rising a little.

"You feelin' pretty good now?" he asked in his usual tone.

"I been in bed sick but I got up." She swept on unregardingly, yet his calmness wrought upon her. "I got to talk and there ain't anybody—but you."

He turned that strange, unwavering look of his on her.

"I'm a-listenin'."

The girl raised her arms high over her head and let them fall leaden back to her lap. But no words came. After a long silence, she burst out:

"Oh, I hate myself. I'm not myself any more. I'm that woman that followed—him—to th' city an' was ready to—" She shuddered. "I was awake most all night livin' through it all again. I couldn't get away from it!"

"No," said the man very gently, "you couldn't." He looked down now, at her small feet set in a prim pattern like a child's.

"I can't ever get away from it"—she rocked her arms to and fro—"my sin, my black sin!"

The man raised his eyes to her face again.

"What sin?"

"My sin. Oh, my black sin!" again in a wail.

He studied her curiously. "Well," he pondered, "you did so again' your father; but I dunno as he had ought to."

"Oh, no, no! 'Tisn't that! I went after him to the city."

He perceived there was something

he could not fathom. "Well?" he urged her.

"An' while I was goin' to him I was so—strange an'—wild I could have done—Oh, I didn't care how it was I got him, so long as I had him. I could a done—anything!"

This time he smiled. "But you did—nothing."

"Yes, I did, too," fiercely. "In my heart I did, an' that's the same as doin' it."

"Not by a long shot, it ain't!"

"The Bible says: 'As a man thinketh in his heart so he is.'"

"I've read th' Bible, too," he retorted unexpectedly, "an' it don't any more mean th' way you thought an' felt than ——" He was at a loss for a strong word. "It don't matter what crazy ideas was in your head that night when you hadn't slept nor eat, you good little girl, you!"

He made a sudden motion toward her, his voice broke, his eyes filmed over, but Philippa, lost in her own misery, neither saw nor heard.

"I've ruined my life!" she moaned.

"You can't ruin your life by one act, nor by a hundred neither, so long as you got any vitality left." He seemed to ponder. "Look here, you know 'bout me?"

This did reach her. "I think—so."

"I'd like you should hear how 'twas from me, though you're the only one ever will."

He shifted his body to a new position, his voice had a quiet sadness, as if it were not of his own life that he talked, but of "old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago."

"I come o' good stock, an' my mother was a saint. When she died we boys an' my father went away to th' city. He died there pretty quick, an' my oldest brother, too—you've seen my other brother. Some folks'll tell you I led th' worst sort o' a life in the city. I didn't. But I went pretty deep; reckless an' lawless an' foolish. One night I went into the lowest hole in th' city; I had been drinkin' some, an' I got into a contention with a fellow there.

You've maybe heard it was all about a woman. It wasn't. I never had anything to do with women, they didn't int'rest me. I never talked so long as this to any other woman, except my mother, in my life. We quarreled over money; he said I owed him some. I said I didn't. Maybe I did, an' had forgot it. He was a miserable, low-down, wreck o' a man drifted in from nowhere, had done a sight o' harm in his time, better out o' the world than left to work more evil. Well, he rushed me with somethin' in his hand. I thought 'twas a knife then, but 'twas only a long, thin strip o' wood. I struck out at him to save myself an' knocked him down. His head hit again' somethin' sharp, an' he was dead in an hour."

"Oh," cried the listener, her own troubles lost at length in this tragic



*He turned that strange, unwavering look of his on her. "I'm a-listenin'."*

story. "Wasn't it awful to think you'd killed a man?"

"No," said the other in the same voice, quieted to level tones. "I was glad a thing like him was out o' the world, an' I wasn't sorry I'd been th' means o' his goin'. I got two years in prison."

"Were they terrible?" breathless.

"No," said the man again, "they weren't. I'm consid'ble strong, I didn't feel th' work; an' th' warden, he was a fine man, was good to me. I had lots o' time to study out things, an' that was what I needed; why, I hadn't ever thought about anything in my whole life, for all I was twenty-six year ol'; I'd just felt an' acted. I come to it that I played a mighty useless an' headstrong part in this world so far, but I had a powerful long life ahead o' me still, maybe half a century. I figured out I was goin' to be another sort o' a man th' next fifty years. Those other years, they were over an' gone, I wasn't goin' to think o' 'em more; no, an' I wasn't goin' to let 'em hinder an' hamper th' new years, either! So I buried 'em deep."

He drew a long breath painfully. "When I came out o' prison," he went on, with no shrinking from the word, "I had money that I hadn't been able to spend all up, tied up for me each year, an' I had this big farm, an' I had my sick brother waitin' to be took care of. So I came home. You know the rest o' it. I've worked more'n some would be willin' to, an' I ain't had friends, but I've caused th' farm to prosper, an' I've made folks respect me, an'—I've taken comfort."

"Oh, yes," breathed the girl. Then tragically: "But don't the things you've done and suffered haunt you—deep in the night, sometimes?"

"No, I don't ever think o' 'em. I won't."

"But we ought to sorrow for our sins. It says: 'Rend your heart.'"

"Once, quick an' get it over in one big tear, but it don't say to keep on a-prickin' an' a-stabbin' at your heart, does it? Well, I guess I did 'nough rendin' th' first weeks I was in prison." A dark look brooded over his face for an instant as if grim shapes rose before him. Then he squared his big shoulders and his face softened to his rare smile. "The rest o' my days are goin' to be given to mendin' an' bindin' up what's been hurt."

"An' turn you to th' Lord, your God," murmured the girl.

"That's it." Something like a slow red grew in his cheeks. "An' that's what you're to do, too. Forget all 'bout any wild kind o' notions may have got mixed up in your head. Things that's forgotten are just the same as if they'd never been. An' keep studyin' 'bout pretty things, th' country round here, an' your folks, an' all like that. And quit thinkin', too—if you can—'bout—him."

"About Bryce?" she said slowly, almost dreamingly. "He led me on to prize him, an' then he didn't prize me."

Russell's face changed into savage meanings, absent from his own story; he clenched the hand on his knee into a furious fist; his whole attitude was a curse, but he said nothing.

"I never cared 'bout anybody but him," in sad wonder. "I never cared 'bout anythin' but this. That's why it comes so hard, I guess."

The man rose hastily to stride about the yard. When he came back he spoke in his old calm way. He sat down on the step beside her, and took her hand, patting it as if she were a child.

"You got years afore you, too. Don't let fifty days ruin fifty years; that ain't reason."

Something calm and brave sounded in his strong voice, looked out from his unflinching eyes, that touched the nerve of her courage. She gave him back a gaze, patient, enduring.

"I will try."

He held her hand in a hard grip.

"When you got to talk come here to say it out to me. Is it a bargain?"

Suddenly tears filled her eyes and trembled upon her lashes.

"Oh, you are *good!*" she cried.

Twice summer burned itself away in fiery flames; twice autumn, honey-colored and gentle, lingered on wistful feet; twice winter, bitter, tonic, gripped the lonely farmsteads; and now it was the spring of a second year. To Philippa it was a strange land in which the first flowers came. Not terrible or grief-smitten as on that bygone August noon, but gray and dim, as if a great blotter passing over it had blurred out all the fresh, bright colors. The sights and sounds and savors of life were all fainter, remoter. Yet happiness still existed, and pleasant it was to see the sun.

This last thought moved her spirit as she stood shaking winter garments to hang them on the line one May morning. The air was a-tremble with the strange sweetness of the spring, the sky was a soft glory of color, the gentle notes of some bird called from the woods. Philippa clasped her hands in sudden gladness, unknown for many a month. These were all hers, no treason of human comrade could reft them from her. She might have said:

Is she forsaken? Beauty's self is nigh her, Closer than bride to the fond lover's arms.

"I'm goin' a-flaggin'," she told herself, pinning up the last garment with energy.

She darted into the house, to reappear with basket and knife. Down along the river's edge she hunted the tender roots of young flagrushes. Now and again she glanced away to the fields where a man and a boy were plowing. The man was Russell Speer.

The closest friendship had grown between them, rooted in Philippa's secret. To him in the desperate weeks she had gone and poured out her poor little story over and over again. He never reasoned upon her grief or inveighed against her lover; he just listened and sympathized. And after the

violence of her grief was overpast for that time, he would lead her, tranquilizing her by his soberness, back to his great thesis, that, forgetting those things which were behind, she should press forward to those which were before. Gradually, as the months passed, he drew her to talk of other things, and he, too, talked, of the life of woods and fields, of village happenings, of adventures of his own in bygone days, of books he had read winter evenings. They rarely mentioned Bryce now, for Philippa had ceased to think of him often. None of these talks was at her house; the step behind Russell's door, the lonely hills behind the farm, the woods along the river, were their meeting places. Philippa, who had won back some of the gypsy spirit of her old days, accepted these secret meetings easily.

Now, as she started home she turned her steps near the field where Russell was plowing. The boy had gone up to the house for some errand. She waved to the man, who, obeying, hurried over to the fence.

"Better come a-flaggin' long o' me," she coaxed.

The man, looking down on her little flushed face and cloud of dark hair blown about by the wind, smiled kindly.

"Got to plow for all's in it to get my livin'!" he answered cheerfully.

"Flags are good to eat."

"Not so good as bread an' butter. This is goin' to be a wheat field."

"Too pretty a day to work," the girl called back mischievously as she flitted away.

In the lane a boy from up the road hailed her.

"Got some mail for you folks," he shouted.

Philippa took the packet indifferently; the days when the mail stirred her were long past. A circular, the county paper, a letter for her. Her face whitened at the postmark, she sank down on a stone. She watched the sky filmed with white clouds, the crows cawing up toward Eagle Mountain, the horses out to graze in the pasture, all to gain courage. Then with shaking

fingers she opened the letter. It was long and confused, but full of love and shame. Bryce Marchant had thrown away a treasure for a paltry toy, liberty, he knew it now. Would she take him back? Could he come over to Pettipaug to see her? This time he would be true forever, for now he understood what she was to him. All he wished in life was to wed her. Out of the mist of words shone a real, new manhood. Philippa covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she cried piteously.

In an instant she turned back across the field where Russell was still plowing alone.

"I want to talk to you," she quivered out.

He noted her face from which all gladness had withered.

"Go down to Flat Rock. Soon as Jim comes to hold th' horses I'll be there."

On the wide rock Philippa thrust the letter into his hands.

"Read it!" she commanded. "It's from Bryce."

He drew away. "Not another man's letter! I can't."

"Yes, yes. You've helped me always before. I can't do it alone. I want to know if he's true."

He fixed his keen eyes upon her. "Do you want to go back to him?"

"How can I tell till I know if he's true?"

She wrung her hands, her small body shook. Not since the first wild days had he seen her so. With a sigh like a groan Russell read the letter, one strong brown hand clasped on his knee. His face was turned from her, it told her nothing. He spoke at last, very low and rather thickly.

"He's honest. He means it. He's got enough of his 'freedom.' He's growed up into a man."

"Wouldn't he get some new notion by an' by?"

"No, he's through with notions, I take it. He's a man now."

"Could I trust him, really, trust him

for always?" she urged, leaning forward till she could see his face.

The man stood up and went to the strip of beach where the river leaped at his feet; his answers came over his shoulders; she had to strain forward to catch them.

"You could trust him, I cal'late, for always."

"Shall I wed him?"

A sound like an oath broke from him; he tramped up the beach and back.

"Shall I, Rus?" she persisted, like a little child.

"Lord A'mighty, child, I don't know your feelin'!"

"But if—I set by him still? Will he be a good—man to me? Will I be happy? Honest?"

He faced straight around. His jaw was sharp set, his blue eyes burned hotly, but his voice was level as he said:

"Philippa, it's my honest word I give you. I believe he's got beyond his fool boyhood now, and is a steady-minded man. I believe he prizes you as high as he can, an' if you wed him he'll make you a happy wife. I got go plow."

Abrupt as his ending, he strode on over the fields, Philippa following him slowly.

All day there beat back and forth in her brain the question should she wed Bryce? Once she had loved him with all her power, once his treason had seared her heart as with a hot iron. Why, she asked herself amazedly, did she not love him now? She did; she was not changeable, whiffled about by the wind. She was frightened lest Bryce should again fail her, that was all. So three days passed in doubt and debate, and yet Philippa could not find her heart yearning to her boy lover as it used once to do.

The fourth afternoon, coming home from a long walk through the woods that brought neither pleasure nor relief, Philippa found pretty Mary Ball in the farm kitchen. Mary was tokened to her brother, Rufus; the first reading of the banns was that Sunday. Mary was in full course of Pettipaug



*As she started home she turned her steps near the field where Russell was plowing.*

news for Grandma Welby, and stopped only long enough to greet Philippa.

"High doin's down to Pettipaug, Mary," remarked the old woman grimly. "I mistrust you won't be content some time to live up here, 'long o' Rufe in this backwoods location."

Mary, flushing prettily at Rufus, laughed back at old Mrs. Welby.

"Oh, there's doin's up here, too. New neighbors for you!"

"Forever!" The old woman dropped her knitting.

"What say, Mary?" asked Cap'n John.

"Well, sir, it's all 'round Pettipaug, Russell Speer's a-goin' West, an' young Ambrose Underwood from Candlelight Hill's intendin' to buy his farm an' bring his bride here."

"Where's Rus goin'?" both Grandma Welby and her grandson asked.

"Oh, way off to a big farm out West,

some place," vaguely. "I cal'late you'll take to Ambrose real quick, he's a sort o' cousin o' mine an' his wife that's to be——"

Philippa walked straight out of the house and down the lane. Mary's news had been like a chemical agent precipitating the confused elements of her thoughts into one clear crystal of decision.

"I don't prize Bryce. I never did really prize him like I ought. I just set by him as an old friend an' he toled me on to think th' rest. I couldn't ever take up with him again, ever! I'll write him I forgive him, I did that, long, long ago, but I can't ever wed him."

She threw her arms high above her head as if free from a heavy burden. How the news about Russell Speer should have settled her relation to Bryce she did not ask. She knew, now, that was enough.

Suddenly, she found herself down by the river and wringing her hands while she moaned: "I don't see how I'm a-goin' to live without him."

And as if she had started a spirit, Russell himself was coming toward her across the fields.

"What's wrong?" he asked her; he often put that question to her and always in a quiet way that calmed her at once.

"I ain't goin' to wed Bryce Merchant!" she cried to him before he reached her.

Russell came very close to her; he seemed to loom over her, tall and commanding.

"Why not."

"I don't prize him, I never did. It was just he'd always been my best friend an' he urged me so——"

"You did set th' world an' all by him, Philippa."

"No, Rus, no." Suddenly she grew very soft and still. "I thought I did, an' I did a good deal, an' when it was all over, it was awful, th' shame an' th' lonesomeness—you know all 'bout that——" She stopped an instant. "But it

wasn't in the greatest way I could, Rus, I know it wasn't!"

The man caught her hand.

"Will you wed me, my little dearie?"

"Why—you don't——"

"Listen now, Philippa." His face brought back to her the day he had told her his own story, its quietness and intensity. "You're th' only girl I ever saw. I never noted others 'nough even to see 'em, but you—I was drawn to you th' very day I came home, an' saw you a-goin' up th' road, little an' light an' quick, an' then that night you run to me for help I began to hold you in my thoughts, you so little an' childish, yet so full o' pluck. An' then all these months I been tryin' to help you fight it out 'long those hard lines an' you been turnin' to me like I was your only comfort—— Why, there ain't words to tell what you are to me, dear."

"But you said to wed Bryce?" in slow wonder.

"I believed you still cherished the ol' feelin's for him. He's a good, reliable fellow now, as I take him, an' lik'ly an'" —for the first time his voice broke—"he's got a clean name 'mong folks to offer you, Philippa."

"Did you feel for me when you advised me to wed him?" still wondering.

The man laughed unsteadily. "Oh, you *little girl!*" he cried. "I was bound to, wasn't I—if I was any sort o' a man?"

"I think you're a *good man*." She looked straight up into his face with her large eyes, clear shining as if a lamp were behind them.

He read their message and caught her in his arms, holding her hard against his breast.

"Out there where we're a-goin', dear, folks won't know any more your man was in prison," he whispered, his cheek pressed to her hair.

"But I'll always know that all these two years you've been helpin' me out o' prison," she whispered back.



ILLUSTRATED BY J. A. LEMON

## CHAPTER I.

CARLOTTA sat on the veranda, reading "Measure for Measure." Her pale brown hair, parted above her broad, smooth, finely modeled forehead, framed the delicately austere lines of her face graciously. Her long white dress fell about her in soft folds and draped itself at her feet almost statuesquely. Back of her, the woodbine against the rough gray of the stone-and-timber house was beginning to flame into its autumn splendor. Altogether, Carlotta made a picture at which any young man with an eye for beauty would perforce gaze twice. And when the young man was Carlotta's affianced husband, it was only natural that he should drink his fill of her satisfying loveliness. The grim, tired lines about Arthur Hardy's mouth smoothed themselves, and the cloud lifted from his face as he approached her, his brightening glance saluting her before he was within vocal hailing distance.

The abstracted manner of the student fell away from Carlotta as she caught sight of him. Her face flushed into a warmer beauty of tenderness and pride.

"Arthur! Here so early! How is the fight going?"

Arthur gave the suburban avenue a hasty inspection before he kissed Carlotta's fingers.

"It's over," he announced briefly.

"Over? How splendid! Did the men see reason so quickly? I've al-

ways known that they only needed to be approached in the right way."

"That was all they needed," Arthur responded, with a return of the sardonic look his face had worn before he had marked Carlotta waiting for him. Then he hurried on: "What are you reading, sweetheart?" He took the volume from her; it was still open at the page where she had been reading.

"I hold you as a thing esquied and sainted," he read. His look dwelt upon her half smilingly, wholly adoringly. "And that's no joke!" he added, with the irrepressible inclination of the young not to seem sentimental.

But Carlotta's gray eyes deepened with pleasure.

"I'm a very ordinary person, Arthur, dear," she told him. "But let me hear about the men. Did you address their meeting at noon?" Arthur shook his head. "Then when?"

"I haven't addressed them at all, Carley."

"Did they delegate some one to come and talk with you?"

"No. But I fixed things up with Stone, dear—the fellow I told you of—the delegate from the central body."

Shakespeare fell to the ground and Carlotta studied her lover's face with startled eyes.

"Arthur! You told me only yesterday that he was a thoroughly corrupt person—you marveled that the men

were so foolish as to let him obtain an ascendancy over them. Why—you said you could bribe him!"

"Carlotta, dearest, that is exactly what I have done," replied Arthur.

His jaws were set, his eyes challenged hers directly and fiercely. She saw no plea for forgiveness in them before she averted her own stricken gaze. She was pale. Mechanically she stooped to pick the book fallen at her feet; mechanically she smoothed the crumpled page upon which it had fallen, and again she saw the line that Arthur had read to her so tenderly and proudly only a few minutes before.

I hold you as a thing eskied and sainted.

Slowly she brought her eyes back to his. He was waiting her verdict.

"Thank you for telling me the truth, Arthur."

"There is no need to thank me for that. It is ordinary between us." He spoke steadily. Then he began again more eagerly.

"Darling, let me explain how the thing seems to me—I know that it has shocked you. You look at it all so academically."

"Of course I shall listen to anything you may wish to tell me," Carlotta interrupted him. "But—of course you must know—you know me—my feelings, my—principles. Oh, you know that this is to me as hideous a sin as you could commit! You may call my point of view 'academic'—she glittered a little with anger—"but I call it only righteous, only decent. Heaven help you, if honor and plain, ordinary honesty—just enough to keep you out of jail—has come to be 'academic' to you!"

"Carlotta, you know what the men's demands were; you know that we simply could not accede to them and keep on with the business; they made them because they thought that I was easy; I met them so promptly the last time. Well, you know, too, what it would mean to us—Hardy, Sons and Co.—to you, and me, and to all the men who own stock in the concern, if we did have to go out of business. But

have you thought what it would mean to the men themselves—the workmen? Take away our dyeing plant, and what does Hardystown become? What other industry is there for them to enter? Two thousand men jobless, two thousand families homeless—some of them people who were actually born to the work! And I proved, even to you, that it would simply break us to accede to their demands, didn't I?"

"Why did you not prove it to them instead of bribing"—she shuddered—"the walking delegate?" Her voice was almost as acid as it was sad. Her lips looked pinched and drawn.

"My dear, they would not listen to me. They will listen to him. They will meet him to-night, and he will have orders from headquarters to call off the strike—to refuse them aid. Because he has a miserable three hundred dollars in his pocket! That was what the strike was threatened for, my dear; to enable Mr. Jemmy Stone to make some money. That is why he put the notion in the men's heads."

"Oh, it is shameful, shameful!" cried Carlotta, covering her face with her hands. "Poor dupes! Sold out by their leaders! Poor, blind, struggling men!"

"Blind, indeed, since they can't see through Jemmy Stone's little games."

"And you—you, Arthur! Not blind, not struggling, not poor! Educated to know the right from the wrong and choosing the wrong! Putting yourself on the level with criminals; lower than they, for they have ignorance to plead as an excuse—ignorance and need."

"I admit that the business world is less lovely than the academic one in which we used to discuss these problems."

"That hateful word again!" cried Carlotta, almost petulantly.

Then they were both silent for a space, he intently watching her, she looking into the distance—the blue distance of hills that bounded the sweeping lawns with their low, stone walls, the shrubberies, gardens, piazzas, houses, neat garages, and all the stage properties of prosperous suburban life.

A group of boys and girls passing with racquets in their hands waved the lovers a gay greeting; an automobile whirled by with a half-heard salutation for them from its veiled and goggled group.

"Carlotta," began Arthur at last, "I know that I am not fit to tie your little silk shoe laces. I know it, I've always known it, I've told you so a thousand times. But, oh, my dear!"

Carlotta looked at him out of eyes big with tears. She shook her head sorrowfully.

"We can't go on, Arthur," she told him. "What you say about me is nonsense, of course. I don't claim any perfections. But—we aren't headed the same way. I used to think that we were. In Professor Tomlinson's courses you often seemed to be speaking for me, so absolutely alike were our views. But since we were graduated and came back here to Hardystown, and you went into the works, we've been growing away from each other in spite of our engagement, in spite of our—love." Her voice quivered and sank. "This is the end, Arthur."

"You're throwing me over?" said Arthur, crude in his moment of loss and humiliation.

An involuntary frown clouded Carlotta's face.

"If you choose to put it so. I certainly can't go on planning to marry a man who violates my sense of justice and right. And so—so grossly! I should never know a happy day. I don't expect to know many happy days as it is." There came into her saintlike eyes a poignant, human look of pain. "But at any rate my unhappiness will not be the agony of watching the man I love degenerate into a common criminal who keeps out of prison only because he is richer and cleverer than others."

Arthur had grown pale during her address. Now he stood up.

"I'm sorry, Carley," he said simply. "I know I seem a—a sort of ethical bounder, to you. Well, I shan't try to urge my own feelings on you. I—good-by."

He went down the steps and along the street. She sat still where he had left her, the disregarded Shakespeare on her lap. As he turned the corner



"Let me explain how the thing seems to me."

and vanished from her view, her imagination played her the trick of seeing him as a small boy, rebuked for a fault, punished by being shut out of the household circle of love and companionship and striving to carry it all off with a boyish swagger of stride though the tears were in his eyes. But she dismissed the vision.

"He is a man," she told herself.

"And he has chosen the part of the oppressor, the intriguer. We could not live together."

It is hard to fill up a life with the sense of one's own virtue, Carlotta found. Time hung heavily upon her after the breaking of her engagement. She suffered much ennui and not a little heartache. A mind conscious to itself of right was a dreary substitute for a gay and tender comradeship. She tormented herself, too, with thoughts of Arthur's spiritual declension from the heights on which she had once dreamed that they would live together.

Before she had consented to marry Arthur—she had made him woo and sue, she had been no easy-dropping fruit to his first reaching after her—she had often wished to follow the example of some of her college mates and to go into a New York settlement. Now that her life was suddenly and, as it seemed to her, shamefully emptied of its purposes, its meaning, she decided to follow that early inclination.

"I shall never get over caring for Arthur," she told herself, when she remembered too poignantly the color of his eyes, his little trick of squaring his shoulders, the firm, inflexible line of his jaw counteracted by the unexpected, boyish sweetness of his smile, and all his little looks and ways. "And so I shall always be sad. But can I not make my sorrow a source of blessing to others? 'Let your grief be the sacred oil wherewith ye feed the lamp of helpfulness; out of your pain make a torch,'" so she quoted something she had once read and stored away in her memory.

The next thing that Arthur Hardy heard of Carlotta Williams was that she had entered a New York settlement.

## CHAPTER II.

As torchbearer to the young women connected with the clubs and classes of Neighborhood Hall, Carlotta was a great success. In appearance she satisfied the universal demand of youth that a leader shall look like a leader; youth is not democratic. The girls modeled

themselves upon her, rather pathetically, but doubtless to their final betterment. They wore their hair like hers, they were more neat and careful in their costuming because Carlotta, for all her saintly qualities, was of a delicate and austere elegance in the matters of dress. They spoke with lower voices than before they had hers to imitate, and in their fervent effort to win her approval they tried to eliminate from their speech slang and even the idioms of their class.

It was with the younger women that Carlotta's influence was most potent. Hers were not the practical gifts to appeal to the wives and the mothers, with their problems about the price of meat, the cure of colic, the urgent need of bail for husbands overtaken in inebriate brawls or sons suspected of petty thievery. The more experienced workers attended to these cases, and rejoiced in Carlotta's effect upon the younger element.

There was one doctrine which she preached with especial earnestness to "her girls" as she called the members of her clubs when she had been in the settlement a month. That was the doctrine that woman sets the moral standard of life; that men are no better than women require them to be, no worse than women permit them to be.

"As long as the man who drinks, the man who trifles with other girls' feelings, the man who is mean, unmannerly, loutish, dishonest, thinks that you, the girl whom he pretends to care for, will condone those offenses, so long will he commit them," she told the girls earnestly, translating into terms of their experience what her own had led her to believe. "The minute that he understands that you demand honesty and clean living as the price of your society or your affection, that minute he will begin to try to make himself worthy of you. Or if he does not, you will be better off, oh, so much better off, than if you linked your life to his, and sacrificed your principles!"

When the Priscilla Club first tried to put into practice the nice precepts of conduct which Carlotta's theory in-

volved, its members were for a time threatened with perpetual wallflower-dom, and its treasury approached bankruptcy, so slimly were its entertainments patronized by the gallantry and chivalry of the neighborhood. That Carlotta was able to prevail over discouragement during this period was eloquent of the ascendancy she had obtained over the girls. And soon, before faith had been subjected to too severe a test, the Priscillas found that what she had taught them was true; the standard of manners which they set for their entertainments was the standard toward which their guests began to struggle. After which, there was no theory that Carlotta could have advanced, no cult that she could have advocated, to which the Priscillas would not have blindly subscribed.

"I wish you would talk to my sister, Mamie, Miss Williams," said Lizzie Kent one night when the rest of the Priscillas had gone home after a jocund evening of Tennyson, lemonade, and shirt-waist making.

Carlotta, torchbearer and club leader, paused in the work of picking up scraps of percale and thread.

"That's the married one, isn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, Mrs. Gus Brown." In spite of herself the girl's voice took on a tinge of pride in the sister who had achieved woman's destiny, dark as was the outcome of that achievement. "I've tried to tell her what you've said to us about a woman not havin' to stand for everything; about it not bein' right for her to stand for everything a man feels like puttin' on her—Gus treats her something awful! But she just says she guesses you ain't cared much for any man yet, or you'd know better than to talk like that."

Carlotta flushed slightly.

"What is the trouble with your brother-in-law?" she asked, evading the subject of her own emotions.

"What ain't?" cried Lizzie bitterly. "They've been married four years, an' I give you my word, Miss Williams, Gus ain't been home two of them. They've got two children—the prettiest

little things you ever saw. He went away both times before the babies came, an' stayed months! An' when he is at home, he don't work half the time. An' drinks, an' when he's full—Carlotta looked reproachfully at Lizzie, and Lizzie amended her speech. "That is, when he is intoxicated, he's just as likely as not to give her or the children a black eye."

Carlotta grew physically faint.

"He strikes his children!" she cried.

"Oh, never to call it really strikin'," Lizzie apologized for the shock she had given her leader. "Only, when he's ugly from drink an' they seem kind of round underfoot—you know! But he never does right by Mamie. She manages well for herself, she's got a good place as janitress of a flat house on Barrow Street—a nice house where well-off people live, an' she washes for some of them, an' picks up quite a little extra, one way an' another. But he'll be comin' back soon now, I suppose—he's been away three months—an' he'll make trouble for her, sure. The people in the house won't stand for his drinkin' an' makin' a fuss down in the basement. This time, Mamie's sort of sore about him, an' I think—I only think, for I can't be real sure of Mamie—that if you was to talk to her a little about what she owes herself an' the children, she might get a separation or something."

"Indeed, I'll talk to her!" Carlotta spoke with the crusader's light in her eyes. Her pale cheeks were flushed with indignation and pity and the sacred glow of sisterhood. "I'll go with you to-morrow evening to see her, when you come down from the store."

"Thank you," cried Lizzie gratefully. "I don't see how any one can help believin' what you say, Miss Williams, when you tell us girls what it's up to us to keep the men up to!"

Carlotta checked a sigh that sought egress, and lowered her eyelids upon a look of pain that leaped swiftly upward from her heart.

Mrs. Gus Brown, in her basement, proved to be more amenable to reason than the missionary had dared to hope.

A thin, dark, passionate little creature she was, aged already by the strain of her feelings and the hard conditions of her life. Her two rooms were neat with a neatness that bespoke a fierce energy; she petted her chubby children—miracles of roundness and rosiness in that underground home—with an intensity of maternal feeling. She said little, but her eyes spoke for her—darkly blazing wells of light under the thin brow and the tightly drawn black hair. Carlotta felt, hopefully, that it was only necessary to direct all of Mamie Brown's power of emotion into the right channels to bring about a resentment of Gus as strong as her devotion to him had been. But the utmost she accomplished was to obtain the wife's half-grudging acquiescence in plans for her freedom.

"I'll do it, Miss Williams," said Mamie. "I'll get a separation if it can be got as simple an' cheap as you say. I know he don't treat me right, I know the children don't stand no chance with him like what he is. I know it's to me that they've got to look for all that they'll ever get. That's the reason I'm willin' to do as you say—I can't have him comin' back an' makin' trouble here for me, the same as he did last time. The tenants won't stand for it, an' if I lose this job what'll become of the kids? So—go ahead. Only"—poor Mamie's thin throat above her collarless bodice worked, and her lips were twisted with pain—"only please don't expect me to feel glad about it—yet."



"He's in trouble, Miss Williams!"

Carlotta patted her on the shoulder.

"By and by," she told the wife, "you'll feel glad about it, not only for the children's sake and the sake of your own peace and safety, but for the sake of women! By and by you'll be glad that you took this stand and told a man that he must live up to your ideals of him or live without you!"

And though Mamie looked skeptical, Carlotta went away rejoicing that out of her own pain she had been enabled to light so brilliant a torch for the wavering feet of her sisters.

It was not difficult, with Neighborhood Hall's sympathetic staff of those who, in philanthropic jargon, were called "uptowners," to find a lawyer willing to undertake Mamie's case for no more substantial fee than Carlotta's smile. Gus, reappearing in the city opportunely for the plans for his wife's comfort, was served with the necessary papers in the suit. To Carlotta's surprise, he took them without threats against Mamie.

"I don't blame her," he was reported to have said. "She got a poor lot when she got me. Poor

Mame!"

Concerning Mamie herself and that injured woman's persistency of antagonism, Carlotta felt some misgiving. Mamie did not grow enthusiastic over her prospective freedom. Once she even turned upon Carlotta when that young woman, endeavoring to arouse in her a greater *esprit de corps*, was preaching to her that in ridding herself of Gus, she served not only her own

interests but the cause of her sex as well.

"It's all right for the likes of you, Miss Williams," flashed Mamie. "You an' ladies like you have plenty to fill up your minds if—if your love matters go wrong. You can travel, you can go to Europe, like Lizzie says you're goin' to go next summer; you can go to the theatre, an' you can go out an' buy pretty clothes an' have parties an' see your friends. Your husband or your beau is just one part of your lives, but it's all we've got. You mustn't expect me to be glad that I'm losin' Gus. If it weren't for the children—" She finished with a dreary sigh.

Carlotta did not feel the occasion auspicious for further inculcation of doctrine.

Before the separation suit came on for hearing, however, something happened to Gus which Carlotta rejoicingly considered the one needed ingredient to crystallize Mamie's half-hearted sense of personal injury into a clear and definite resentment. An election was in progress. Gus, in fact, had reappeared in his city haunts in order to furnish his leader with a voter. Unfortunately, his leader needed more than one vote from Gus, and decreed that he should furnish several. Gus was arrested as a repeater. The region about Neighborhood Hall rang with his plight. Carlotta heard of it with something akin to relief tempering her horror. This would surely put the needed fire into Mamie's lukewarm wrath against her husband. A criminal, a criminal of the most dangerous and dastardly type! So Carlotta, trained in due reverence for the sacred franchise, called him in her mind.

On the morning after Gus' arrest she was not altogether surprised to learn that Mrs. Brown was downstairs seeking her. Doubtless Mamie desired to have her suit hurried a little. Doubtless she felt anxious to remove from herself and her children as swiftly as possible the stigma of connection with Gus, the repeater. She sent for Mamie to come to her room that their conference might be private. It was Mamie's first penetration into the region

beyond the assembly halls and offices of the settlement, and Carlotta half expected her to show upon her face some admiration of the large, airy room with its carefully planned charm of simplicity, harmony, and order. But Mamie's dark eyes took no note of anything but of Carlotta herself.

"Oh, Miss Williams!" she cried, a little breathlessly. "I want it stopped! I want it stopped! The suit against Gus—I want it stopped!"

"Stopped!" faltered Carlotta, almost dumfounded.

"Yes. Oh, you ain't heard—he's in trouble, Miss Williams!"

"Certainly I had heard," replied Carlotta, regaining her faculties. "He has been guilty of one of the meanest crimes in the calendar; he has been guilty of trying to rob men of what, in this country, is their most valuable possession—the right to say what they want done by their government! Is that the reason you want to return to him?"

Mamie waited patiently for the torch-bearer to finish.

"I know he's done wrong, ma'am," she said, but it was a perfunctory acknowledgment of her husband's guilt. "But, oh, ever since I heard it last night I see things plain again! I ain't seen them plain once, all the while I've been listening to you an' led by you; though I ain't blamin' you, an' I know you've meant to be kind, an' I suppose you're right for ladies like you an' the kind of gentlemen you know. But, oh, Miss Williams, it ain't right for my kind! Why, I see it all as clear now!" Her dark eyes glowed prophetically, a clear color flushed her wasted, sallow cheeks.

"I'm sure," began Carlotta, hesitant in the face of this fervor of conviction, but Mamie did not let her finish.

"Why, your way makes us friends with people only as long as it's to our gain to be friends, only as long as we can be happy an' proud of bein' friends with them. What sort of likin' or love is that? It's when a man is down an' out that he needs you; an' when is he so down an' out as when he's on the wrong road, headed wrong? If I said to you: 'I'll be Gus' true wife as long



*"The gent, he comes quick to her an' takes her the two hands by."*

as he's in good health an' earnin' good wages,' you'd be the first to say to me: 'That's no kind of a way for a wife to talk!' But you teach me to say, instead: 'I'll be Gus' true an' lovin' wife as long as he's sober an' kind an' steady, as long as he don't hurt my feelin's or shame my pride!' An' that's as bad as the other, Miss Williams, that's as bad as the other! I've come to tell you that I'm his wife as long as he needs

me, an' that he never needs me more than when he's disgracin' himself an' me! Oh, it ain't true love that bargains, it ain't true love that makes terms an' says it will last as long as love is an ornament, a flower, that you can wear in people's eyes an' be proud!"

She ended with a sudden burst of exhausted tears.

Carlotta, dazed and troubled, ministered to her, taking her battered hat

from her head, piling cushions behind her, bringing her a dry handkerchief, bathing her eyes by and by, and saying no more about the ennobling influence of woman. And, after a while, Mamie went home, her dark, little face shining with a proud defiance for her commiserating neighbors, and with something tenderer than that. And Carlotta, attending like a person in a trance to the details connected with stopping the separation suit, kept repeating to herself, bewilderedly, Mamie's creed.

"Not true love that bargains, not true love that makes terms and says it will last only as long as it is an ornament, a flower, that you can wear in people's eyes and be proud!"

But what of influence, what of stimulation by the hope of reward, by the dread of punishment, what of intellectual honesty, and of the proud right to one's principles and convictions—nay, of duty to them?

"It's when a man is down an' out that he needs you, an' when he is so down an' out as when he is on the wrong road, headed the wrong way?" Mamie's voice, tremulous with longing, vibrant with conviction, rang upon her fancy.

Carlotta was a conscientious young woman and made high demands of herself. She drooped under the suspicion that perhaps she had been guilty of selfishness, of choosing the easier way. Moreover, she kept on seeing Arthur as she had seen him last, coming to her with the tired face of a man who has been in conflict, brightening at sight of her, and then, after a while, leaving her with that little boy's "I-don't-care" swagger. Had she been true to her sociological and ethical principles by the sacrifice of something greater still?

She worked on doggedly for a month, looking with uncomprehending eyes upon Mamie Brown grown suddenly splendid with love and surety, although the case against Gus had been proved, and only his district leader's zealous power had saved him from sentence. Was it an ignoble, weak sentiment that lit the lights in Mamie's dark eyes? Or could it be that she, ignorant, untrained

soul, held the secret of the meaning of life?

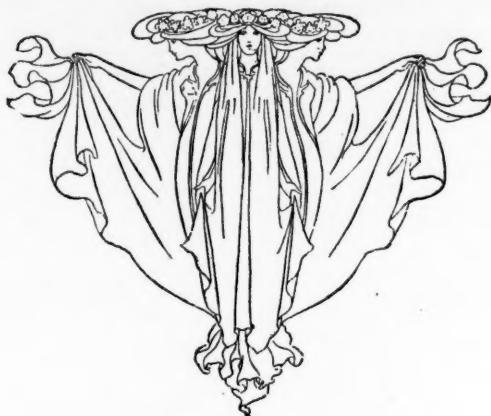
A month such as she had never known in all her righteous young existence was Carlotta's, a month of self-doubting, self-questioning, because of the fervid words of one unschooled woman. She was haggard at the close of it. On its last day she wrote a letter to Arthur Hardy. She tried earnestly to convince herself that her anxiety for his reply was merely the anxiety of a contrite heart, awaiting the acceptance of its confession. When she did not hear from him by the first mail of the first day on which she could possibly receive an answer, however, she was forced to admit to herself that the pain in her heart could not be accounted for on abstract ethical grounds. She was lonely, weak, and human—she wanted her lover; not to lead him in the smoothly righteous paths of her sure choice, but to stumble with him along the common road, not his teacher, but his fellow pupil to the end of the journey.

Arthur arrived at Neighborship Hall from the night train just twenty minutes after the distribution of the first mail. Carlotta, summoned to the reception room—all mission furniture, copper bowls, and ancient architectural photographs, as an object lesson in the art of simple furnishing—trembled when she saw who was the "gentleman" who had been anonymously announced. Miriam Sofoski, temporarily doormaid to Neighborship Hall in the absence of her mother at the hospital, was an interested observer and later a vivid narrator of what followed.

"Teacher, she stands still like for a second, an' the gent, he comes quick to her an' he takes her the two hands by, this way. An' she kind of pulls back an' he says: 'My darlin'! My dear saint!' An' then he kisses her the hands, an' leaves off of holdin' them on. An' she kind of cries like, an' she says somethin' about not knowin' right from wrong any more yet; an' he says how she is always right, an' how there is goin' to be an investigation of somebody which his name is Stone, an' I

don't know him, for he don't live around here, an' how he's goin' to make a clean breast of somethin'—the gent with teacher is goin' to—an' take the consequences. An' then he sees me; I'm lookin' through a crack in the door, for it ain't closed, only pulled some to;

an' he laughs like by me, an' he says: 'What's your name? Well, Miriam, you beat it!' An' he hands me a quarter out. An' I starts to beat it, but first I takes one more look, an' say, what do you think I see? I see him a-kissin' the tears by teacher's face off."



### A Window Plant.

**A** WINDOW plant, five stories up,  
A tangled spray of red and green  
Within a modest earthen cup,  
It means more than a flower can mean  
That blows in some idyllic scene.

Below, the street's dull monotone;  
Men falter on their winding ways,  
'Twixt somber walls of steel and stone,  
While on the tenement's dark face  
A little thing of rustic grace.

The bonny banks where wild thyme grew,  
Gay daffodils by Wordsworth's shore,  
Sweet violets in hoods of blue,  
And many a rose from days of yore—  
They were but bloom, and are no more.

But this wee flower in such a spot  
Bespeaks a soul in sympathy  
With Nature, tenderness of thought,  
Kinship with minds of high degree,  
And love and old gentility.

WILLIAM F. McCORMACK.

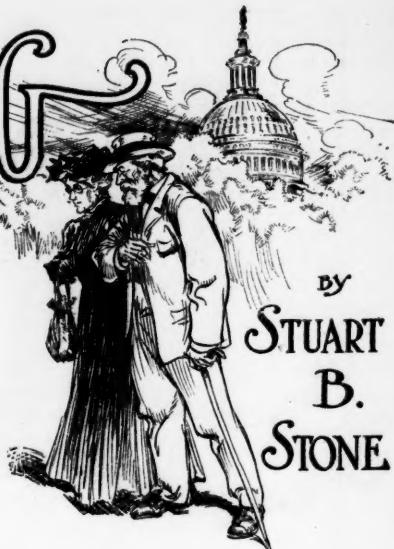
# WAITING

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. X. CHAMBERLIN

YOUNG Tom Gunnison was a graduate and postgraduate of the Central Normal College of Iowa and versed in the lore of logarithms, isotherms, cuneiforms, dinosaurs, dead languages, fourth dimensions, and forty-seventh propositions. Therefore and fittingly, the chief clerk of the bureau of documents and correspondence in the service records division of the adjutant general's office in the war department at Washington assigned him to the work of copying with a pen—for in that day there were no click-clack typewriters—the names and addresses of the writers of letters, with brief synopses of the contents of the communications, upon index cards for the files; and allowed him fifty dollars a month for the transcribing.

The new clerk had come to Washington to demonstrate to the honorable the secretary of war the splendid abilities and tremendous energies of Thomas Herbert Gunnison, and on the first day of his service he would have surpassed all records of the department for the number of letters thus briefed, had it not been that old Captain Moreland, who sat upon young Tom's right and corrected the cards of all the indexers in room 159, returned a good two-thirds for rewriting.

"Don't you be in too big a hurry, young man," the captain advised, with a shake of his time-silvered head. "The fellow that used to be on that desk never did more than half that many cards in a day, and he was drawing twelve hundred dollars. It don't get



you anything to work your head off here in the war department."

The next day, with his mind still centred on the honorable secretary, Tom produced an equal number of the trim white index cards, and of these the placid captain could find fault with but two or three. On the third day, the top of the captain's desk remained undrawn. From the colored assistant messenger Gunnison learned that the veteran, after forty-three years of satisfactory service, had gone to present his own life index card for approval at the desk of the angel recorder. Young Tom sighed vigorously for the departed captain; but he had yet to compel the eye and ear of the secretary, and he wrote and wrote legible, lucid, comprehensive cards faster than the room chief could supply him with letters, until the latter touched him upon the arm.

"Miss Sigsbee, this is Mr. Gunnison," the room chief introduced. "He has been working with Captain Moreland and can assist you in getting things straightened out."

"Glory!" thought young Tom. "What



*"Miss Sigsbee, this is Mr. Gunnison," the room chief introduced.*

rose-and-creamy cheeks! What a rippling lot of brown-and-gold hair!" And he bowed as they bowed in '64.

In the course of their first day's work together Tom learned that Edna Sigsbee had recently been appointed from Virginia, that she had been correcting index cards in room 161 for forty-five dollars a month, that she liked the departmental service very much, and that her favorite poet, salad, month, flower, and waltz song were his favorite poet, salad, month, flower, and waltz song. Also, he managed to tell her quite a bit about himself, and he spun for her the fine gold woof of his life dream.

"You see, I've an idea there's a splendid chance for the young fellow with reasonable ability and capacity who will apply himself here in the departments. These old fogies who have been here all their lives shake their heads and say: 'No use—take it easy.' But my theory is: If you do your work a bit better than any one else has ever done it, and keep everlastingly at it,

you're bound ultimately to attract the attention of the secretary himself. And that's what I'm here for."

And Edna Sigsbee nodded her pretty head for wondrous sympathy.

It required no more than a week for Tom Gunnison to realize fully that Miss Sigsbee was the brightest, the best-looking, the most cheerful girl he had ever known. It required no more than a month for him to determine that she possessed every precious attribute and every possible requirement of the future Mrs. Thomas Herbert Gunnison. It required no more than three months for him to sense that, despite the numerous young gallants of the division who swarmed about her on every possible pretext, she had recognized on her own account some of those splendid abilities and tremendous energies of the gentleman from Iowa Centre.

After that, it was a matter of awaiting the incoming of the new administration. If he could retain his position, he intended to ask her to become Mrs.

Gunnison. In the meantime he penned the white index cards faster and faster. For the honorable the secretary sat behind the massive doors of 284 upstairs, and what had been done might be done again.

In the first week of the new régime, Tom was summoned upstairs and advised that in the general shake-up he would secure promotion to the sixty-dollars-a-month class. He sped down the steps to a clatter of "Sixty dollars, sixty dollars—I can marry now, can marry now, can marry now." He frightened Miss Sigsbee almost into hysterics before she realized the full glory of the news.

"I'm so glad you're promoted," she assured him. "Of course there never was any doubt about you. But I'm very anxious on my own account."

Whereat young Tom laughed recklessly and declared he would like to see the department that would discharge so valuable and faithful an employee. In his heart he added that it lay with her whether she worked any more anyhow.

That evening after work, he set forth to investigate the numerous rooms, flats, and suites he had seen advertised at from seven to twenty dollars a month. Recently he had become a bit doubtful as to the sufficiency of the fifty-dollar salary, and he had meant to make sure before he spoke to her. But with the sixty-dollar promotion, it was merely a matter of selection.

"I must have three big, bright, sun-kissed rooms with a stretch of green to soothe her eyes while she waits for me," he mused. "And I can't go out too far because I didn't come here to swell the dividends of the street-car company."

As he started briskly for the northeast quarter, he was humming an old love song that he had heard his mother croon back in Iowa Centre. As he took the rickety, paint-peeled steps leading to the first "highly desirable apartment at twenty dollars," he sang the second verse of moonlight and rose gardens—though in subdued measure. Within the unclean, faded "apartment," however, the song died. He stepped to the

unwashed window and looked out upon a desolation of tin cans, ash heaps, tipples, drying raiment, and ramshackle outbuildings.

"She'd wear her dear heart out here," he declared.

In the open sunlight again, he renewed the mother song of love. He whistled it—a bit hesitantly perhaps—as he gazed up at the "three bright and cheerful rooms with southern exposure," over the Jolly Fat Men's Saloon. He continued to whistle the haunting thing as he discovered that Montgomery Street, with its "attractive proposition for light housekeeping," was a cat-infested, grease-redolent alley. He hummed the tune—very jerkily now—as he realized that the "ideally located flat at twenty-two dollars" at No. 41 Logan Avenue groaned from the concussion of the freight engines that passed within two yards of the window.

But he brought the revered tune to a dismal finale as he ascertained that the "four lovely rooms" in the Hernando Building were wedged in upon the sixth floor among a colony of chiropodists, dentists, palmists, and loan men; and he whistled Wagnerian dirges as he learned that the other homes in contemplation were too far out, too small, too lofty, too crumbling, too ancient, too anything and everything. For two weeks he searched the City of Magnificent Distance, and then he gave up and decided to wait.

"I just can't ask her to marry me on sixty dollars a month," he concluded. "I simply couldn't take care of her like a Virginia girl is used to being taken care of. I must buckle down to those blessed index cards and turn out so many of them so much better than any one else has ever turned them out that the wonder of it all will break through the big door of number two hundred and eighty-four and keep the secretary of war awake of nights until he has to give me another promotion."

"You appear tired," Edna Sigsbee told him the morning after the abandonment of the great, hopeless search. "Why don't you take a little of your annual leave, and rest?"



*"She'd wear her dear heart out here," he declared.*

He smiled wearily. "No time to get tired now after Uncle Sam has just told a fellow he has made good. I'm going to turn in and have Secretary Payne wanting to know who the deuce it is that does such a lot of fine work down in room one hundred and fifty-nine."

"I don't know," she said. "I don't think anything we do in here gets past the chief clerk of the division at any rate."

"Got to get past," declared Tom Gunnison. "Why, suppose a fellow wanted—wanted to—er—er—"

She blushed vividly, and Tom, pushing back the sleeves of his thin, black work coat, set to work. He was twenty-two, then, and the illegible, rambling, plaintive requests for enlistment, prayers for the discharge of wandering boys, petitions for the pardon of waif-and-stray husbands were summarized, indexed, and cross-indexed upon the stiff white cards at a rate that kept the bald, sedate room chief pushed to supply the correspondence.

For a year—two, three, four years—young Tom Gunnison worked harder than a man should work even in the blessed twenties. His pen sped over the crisp white cards; he strove eagerly to secure correspondence that should have been divided among the other indexers; he made uncanny suggestions that caused the bald room chief to smile and shake his head. Occasionally

Tom would write down his ideas for the betterment of departmental conditions and address the suggestions to the chief clerk of the department, with a prayer that the honorable the secretary, seeing, would inquire: "Who is this young fellow Gunnison? Why, that's the kind of a man I need in my office!"

But the room chief frowned upon these efforts and chucked them into the waste basket. And the secretary sat behind his massive doors, ignorant and unmindful of the human card mill that worked too hard down in 159.

Edna Sigsbee was increasingly popular. The young beaus of the department strolled with her to work, waited for her in the green circle parks, lingered before her neatly kept desk. Some of them escorted her to the dances and theatres. One, a paymaster's clerk, fairly shadowed the girl, then dropped out altogether. Tom imagined that Terry had proposed, and felt keenly sorry for him. Another, young Reynolds of the quartermaster general's office, stepped in to take Terry's place, and Tom felt constrained to speak.

"This young Reynolds is not just the sort I'd want to come to see my sister—or—or any girl I cared for," he warned.

"I told him last night he mustn't come any more," she agreed, with a queer look at Tom.

Tom took the adorable Edna to Shakespearian lectures, flower shows, regattas, and popular-priced summer opera. He couldn't take her to see Booth and Barrett and the grand opera—that is, he couldn't very often—because it would have made too deep a hole in the slowly growing bank deposit intended to be used some day in the outright purchase of a suburban elysium, which, with its exemption from rent and its market-gardening facilities, would prepare the way for the asking of the great question. And it did seem as if the secretary was going to leave the discovery of the prodigy in 159 to the eye of his successor.

After six years of straining, Tom Gunnison slackened speed.

"I'm going in for a law course," he confided one morning. "It looks as if the old fogies are right when they say: 'No use—take it easy.' I've a friend—Warrick, over in one hundred and sixty-one—who reads newspapers in office hours, and he's just been promoted to twelve hundred dollars. Half the young fellows in the department are taking night courses in law, medicine, engineering, or architecture."

"Then—then you'll be leaving—when you graduate?" asked Edna, a little pale.

"Oh, that depends on the secretary,"

he answered. "It's good knowledge to have, anyhow. It gives a man something to fall back on."

The cost of matriculation and tuition at the night school and the purchase of textbooks all but wiped out the suburban elysium fund; but Tom essayed rights of piscary and turbary, torts, trover, administrators, and executors, with the same vim and enthusiasm that he had put into the letter indexing. He recalled the Honorable Jefferson Downs, the rich lawyer of Iowa Centre, and began work on a prize thesis on "Some Sidelights on the Custom of Estovers As Interpreted by the Norman Common Law." He read eagerly the stories of the fabulous sums paid to corporation attorneys, and prepared to contest for the Gurney medal for orators. He won the Gurney medal, and, afame with the glory of it, almost proposed to Edna, as she sat placidly correcting some of his helter-skelter work. He did place the morning paper containing the half-column write-up of the event upon the desk of the bald room chief. The proposal he postponed until graduation.

Later in the term, he won an inter-collegiate oratorical medal and was carried about on the shoulders of his noisily enthusiastic college mates. The paper containing the write-up, with pictures of himself and opponents, he bribed old Calhoun, the secretary's colored factotum, to lay, spread open at the place, upon the great man's desk. Perhaps, if the secretary saw and was mindful enough to appreciate and reward true talent, Tom might be induced to remain in the department as an assistant secretary, a chief clerk, or a solicitor general. But the breeze wafting in from the broad Potomac must have blown the paper from the desk, or the great official, seeing first black headlines of war, catastrophe or political strife, looked no further.

At the graduation exercises, Edna Sigsbee sat up in front and beamed sympathetically into Tom's face when, as class valedictorian, he preached forcibly and eloquently the sameness of knowledge and power. It was a hard

thing to hold back his declaration that evening as he walked home with her; but the price of the golden-sealed sheepskin had completely dissipated the suburban elysium fund, and he didn't feel justified in pleading the case of a caseless lawyer. He must wait until—until—

"I suppose you'll be leaving the service now?" she asked a trifle jerkily, after they had walked four blocks in silence.

"N-n-o, n-n-o, I think I'll wait until—until—" And he left it thus.

He waited—as the world waits—until, until— As he waited, he began to note here and there the clerks who had golden-sealed diplomas tucked away in dusty drawers. Possibly every fifth man was a graduate of law, medicine, dentistry, or engineering—and waited. Another fifth had begun a course, abandoned it—and waited. Class valedictorians, class historians, gold-medaled orators drifted back into the service every day, having found the gray, bleak world unappreciative of the knowledge-power fine phrases and the splendor-sealed sheepskins. Tom Gunnison grew fearful of the whole scheme of things.

"Have you determined just when you are going to resign?" she asked him one day. Her beauty was riper and richer, Tom noted as he replied:

"I'm not going to resign at all. I'm going to stay here and wait until the secretary comes to his senses."

The deep flush that came into her cheeks, the soft, happy light that came into her eyes thrilled him through and through.

Tom waited. So did the secretary—and the next secretary—and the next. The hairline of Tom's forehead began to retreat crownward. He cultivated a little military mustache, and then a vandyke. The vandyke began to frost at the tips, and he dyed them, feeling rather like a sham and fraud. Edna ceased to plume and flounce, and began to affect the more sober hues. The satellite swarm of gallants diminished in numbers, disbanded altogether. Bernard Terry, whom she had refused,

married a wealthy widow. Dickey Reynolds, the dissolute, was dismissed from the service. The bald, rotund room chief died, and a nervous, clerk-pushing youngster took his place. The time came when Tom Gunnison was summoned by telegraph to Iowa Centre, returning with a band of crape about his hat.

"No man ever had a better mother," he confided brokenly, and the sympathy in her eyes had him almost blurting the love story, regardless of the fact that the suburban elysium fund was only a fifth completed and the sixth secretary of his time had remained unmindful and unappreciative. Then a heedless messenger boy brought her a yellow envelope and she departed hurriedly. She returned, a dry-eyed, yearning divinity in black, and he longed to place her head upon his shoulder and tell the beautiful story—if only the secretary would do something.

Tom's iron-gray hair receded now in ever-widening circle from the crown. He allowed the dye to fade from the scholarly vandyke. Lines of care and waiting appeared about his still twinkling eyes. He celebrated his forty-fifth birthday by taking Edna to see Jefferson in "The Rivals." He celebrated his fifty-fifth birthday by drinking Russian tea in her room. One day he purchased a cane and was surprised to find it of great assistance in coming to work. She relinquished furs and feathers and took up reticule and eyeglasses. Tom sold his textbooks to a civil-service stenographer and typewriter from Kansas. He jocularly offered to dispose of his gold-sealed sheepskin and the knowledge-power sheepskin with the books.

Hearing that his friend in 161 had been promoted to the fourteen-hundred-dollar class, Tom went to the new room chief and practically demanded the long-deferred advancement. The chief pointed out that Tom didn't write half the cards he had once written and stated that the policy of the department was to promote the young stenographers and typewriters.

Then Tom gave up waiting and sim-

ply held on. He was sixty-eight. In his forty-six years of departmental service, he had saved half of the suburban elysium funds. In another forty-six years he might be in position to speak to Edna, despite the secretary's never-seeing eye. Oh, Tom Gunnison was still capable of making his little joke.

He looked across the desk at Edna Sigsbee, checking, correcting, cards, cards, cards. Edna was sixty-five. She had told him her age that evening he had taken her to see Booth as

*Sir Giles Overreach*. But she looked much more like sixteen than that pert, little Wyndham girl in 161. He wondered if Edna knew that he loved her—he wondered if she ever would know. He wondered if—

The room chief touched his arm, broke in upon his reverie. There was a strange look upon the chief's face. Possibly—probably—certainly—this must be the long-awaited promotion.

"Gunnison," said the chief, "the chief clerk wishes to see you and Miss Sigsbee up in two hundred and eighty-two."

Then the secretary must have heard at last. Thank God! It paid to work and wait.

The chief clerk had but few words to

say. He preferred to utter them with his eyes averted from the tremulous couple. The old, old cry of retrenchment had been sounded once more, he stated. The order for a general weeding out of aged and unnecessary employees had been given. It was regrettable that there was no old-age pension system in vogue in the service. No doubt both of them had saved from their salaries a sufficient sum to provide for the remainder of their lives. They had given splendid service, but of course the department couldn't discharge the brisk young stenographers and typewriters that the Civil Service was certifying regularly. And good-by and good luck. The chief clerk slipped



from the big room, leaving the two dazed and hardly comprehending.

For a moment old Tom Gunnison looked dully at the report of the quartermaster general of the army for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1910, upon the big desk. Then something spattered upon and trickled over the blue-backed report, and old Tom, looking up, saw that Edna's eyes were moist.

Old Tom Gunnison started forward, wavered, then stooped and kissed the faded lady's cheek.

"Edna," he quavered, "I've—I've waited forty-six years for the right to do that, and now—now that the right never will—never can be mine, I've done it anyhow. I've waited on promotion, on change of administration, on law and luck, and secretaries and justice, and the hopeless chance of saving enough to buy a suburban elysium of a home. I've won golden medals; I've broken departmental records; I've given them my very life, but it seems like it was all no use. Right or no right, you're brighter, prettier, dearer than the day you nestled into old Cap Moreland's desk with your hair all brown and goldy and your cheeks all rose and cream. I love you more—"

"Oh, Tom!" interrupted the faded lady. "I could have helped you. My salary combined with yours would have been sufficient all along. And I've the other half of the money to buy the suburban elysium. Oh, Tom, why didn't you?"

Old Tom put his arms about her, and as she sobbed happily upon his shiny office coat, it seemed to him that he had just turned at the room chief's call to meet the Virginian beauty.

"If I had known—" gulped old Tom Gunnison.

"If I had known—" sobbed the faded lady.

A step behind them did not arouse the couple. It required a second step and a grave, official "Ahem!" to prize them apart. The secretary of war had entered the room.

"Mr. Gunnison, I believe?" he asked apologetically. "I beg pardon for intruding, but I didn't know—er—that is, I was in the next room and overheard Mr. Bromley's remarks. I merely wished to say that the new order is not meant to apply to the department's most experienced and most faithful employees, and that you needn't fear dismissal. The fact is, there is a twenty-five-hundred-dollar vacancy in my office, and I am sure that, with your experience and capabilities, you are the man I need. I hope to have you begin your new duties to-morrow. Good evening."

As the secretary departed, old Tom Gunnison threw out his shrunken chest joyfully.

"I always said that, if a fellow kept plugging away here in the departments, the secretary would be bound to recognize him," he observed to the faded lady.





## An Interview With Neptune

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

**M**E and me shipmate Otto  
We crawled into a grotto,  
And there we drank a gallon jug of old Jamaica rum.  
Our talk, at first profound, sir,  
Got sort o' twisted round, sir,  
Till Otto he began to sing "O fingle-tingle-dum."

At last he fell to snorin',  
The lonesomeness was borin',  
Till suddenly across the sea a wondrous sound I heard,  
A merry dancing steptune;  
And lo, old Father Neptune,  
A-dripping, skipping on the waves, ariz without a word.

"Oh, Father Nep!" I called, sir.  
The dear old bloke was bald, sir,  
And up aloft a golden crown hung lightly o'er his ear.  
He stopped and raised his trident,  
Then yelled in accents strident:  
"Good mornin', Mariner McGee! What are you doing here?"

Me heart was all a-flutter.  
I answers, weak as butter:  
"Ye see, Mate Otto and meself we found this cave so snug,  
We thought it would be cheap, sir,  
To steal a little sleep, sir—"  
"Yo ho!" yells Neptune, laughing loud. "Let's see what's in your jug!"

"Please, sir, the jug's not workin',"  
I answers, slyly smirkin'.  
"Not workin'!" thunders Neptune, like an overgrown typhoon,

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

So, with a powerful lug, sir,  
He lifted up that jug, sir,  
Which spurted out a waterspout twice higher than the moon.

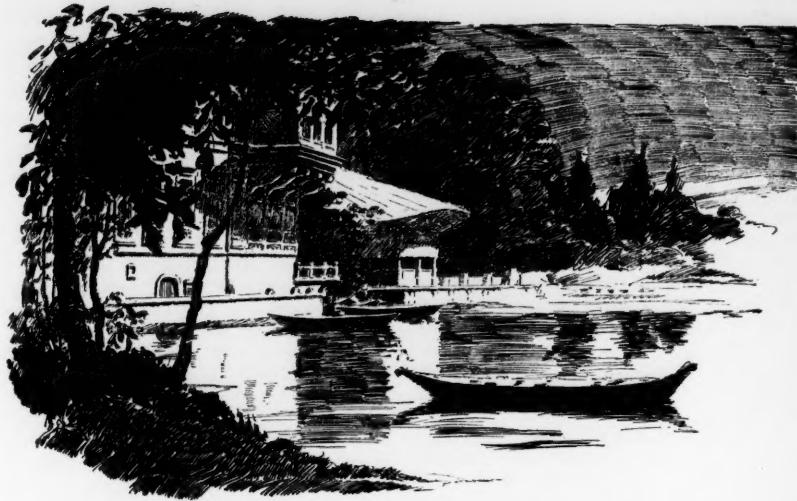
"An empty jug, ye say, sir?"  
Roars Nep. To my dismay, sir,  
He grasped that rum-depleted jug more firmly in his hold,  
Which, like a mad volcano,  
At once began to rain-on  
A shower of nails and elephants and frogs and molten gold.

I don't know what possessed it.  
"I never would of guessed it!"  
Says I to Nep. "Horatio," answers Father Nep to me,  
"I've really got a notion  
In heaven and earth and ocean  
There's more darn kinds o' cussedness than some folks dreams," says he.

Thus speaking, snug 's a bug, sir,  
He crawled into that jug, sir,  
Which, right before me face and eyes, was changed into a whale.  
And that there fishy mammal,  
A-sailin' like a camel,  
Played "Yankee Doodle" on his pipes, then vanished in the gale.

Within that fishy grotto  
I woke me shipmate Otto.  
"Oh, friend," I yelled, "we're sure bewitched—go signal 'C. Q. D. I'"  
I told him what I'd saw, sir,  
Whereat he snickered: "Pshaw, sir,  
The proper wireless call for *you* is merely this: 'D. T. I'"





# The Gift-Wife

By Rupert Hughes

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

## SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Two old college friends, David Jebb and Bill Gaines, meet in the *Nord Express*, bound for Ostend, where they are to embark for America. Jebb is a famous surgeon, who is in charge of a little girl, Cynthia Thatcher, whom he is taking to her mother. He confesses to Gaines that he is subject to intermittent spells of drinking, when he knows nothing of what he does or says. Gaines gets off the train and is left behind. Jebb's hand is mangled in a door of one of the cars, and he faints. He is given brandy by one of the passengers. This starts him off. He leaves the train with Cynthia at Cologne and begins to drink. The next thing he knows he is lying in a strange room, attended by a black man. The child is gone and all his money. Suddenly a woman heavily veiled enters. She speaks English and from her he learns that he is in a Turkish harem, where he has been brought in a state of unconsciousness. The woman's name is Miruma, and she has been given as a wife by the sultan to a pasha named Fehmi. The black slave, Djaffer, breaks his arm, and Jebb sets it. No tidings can be learned of Cynthia. Jebb becomes deeply interested in Miruma, and she in Jebb. It is dangerous for him to remain where he is, so, with the assistance of Miruma, he is taken away in disguise, and goes to a hotel. The young son of a certain bey is ill. Jebb performs an operation and saves the boy's life. Then Miruma's husband, Fehmi Pasha, comes to him to ask him to attend his first wife. Jebb goes to the pasha's house, and Miruma is sent for to act as interpreter.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BASH-KADIN.

THOUGH he could not understand the elaborate Turkish of the pasha's greeting, Jebb could see the mingled constraint and curiosity of his manner. There was something of the aged bridegroom in his cordiality as he seemed to peer through the yashmak of the woman who had been his

yes-and-no wife for years. There was something of the faithful husband, too, for Nahir Hanum was lying in the next room, and weeping weakly, a sick woman in great dismay.

Miruma, speechless with triple distress, answered the pasha only by making deep obeisances as she came forward and kissed his hand, like a slave afraid of a master; a second wife intruding upon a first wife before she

was in her grave, and, besides, a girl confronted with the man she had begun to love, but dared not acknowledge.

The pasha received Miruma's homage with a poor attempt at lofty majesty. Then he remembered Jebb, and spoke of him in Turkish with an evident flourish in his praise. Miruma, thus licensed, turned her eyes full upon him, and the pasha made the presentation in his best French.

Jebb bowed, Miruma lifted imaginary dust and placed it on her breast, her lips, and her brow.

Then the pasha raised the portière to his wife's room and Miruma went in, trembling with fear and bowing with all the deference required of a second wife before the Bash-Kadin.

The curtain fell and hid what followed. Jebb could hear the pasha's uneasy treble in halting phrases of Turkish; the faint whimpering of Nahum fighting her weakness and her jealousy in vain; the deep tones of Miruma rich with appeasing tenderness. Three destinies unwillingly chained together, unable to break the mutual links they all resented.

A little later Jebb was summoned. The pasha spoke again to Miruma, evidently counseling her to talk freely to the *Amériguali jerrah*. Then he bowed himself out.

There was a pause of embarrassment, the sick woman's eyes rolling like a terrified animal's from one to the other of the invaders of her sanctuary. She was mortally afraid of the foreign infidel to whose magic she must intrust the temple of her body and the failing lamp of her life. But she seemed even more afraid of the woman of her own race; for she herself, as she knew all too well, was worn from the bearing of many children and their sustenance, and from the drain of their sorrows upon her; she had been Fehmi Pasha's wife till she had no longer a new look, word, or thought to offer him. Miruma was yet a girl, a mystery; in her eyes was the light of unpeased youth; a wealth of hair was crowding her veil, and one could surmise what lips the muslin hid. And the shapeless robes

about her form were eloquent at least of the absence of angles or exuberances; her hands and forearms were an earnest of every grace, and her voice was luxurious with charm.

The worn-out wife could not know how Miruma dreaded Fehmi Pasha; she could only think of her as envious, ambitious to crowd the Bash-Kadin into her grave, and possess the dignity and the power of the household.

There was dire bitterness in the gaze of Nahir upon Miruma, and the very homage she paid her charms was further condemnation of the interloper, the usurper. But she was too feeble to rise and expel her, too feeble to ask her to remain away and forbear from troubling the last rites of dissolution with life.

She could only turn her eyes upon Jebb, wondering if the foreign hireling could or would be her friend or a treacherous ally to her enemy. She could only try to pray with her eyes for his pity and his mercy.

Miruma felt all these things in the air, read them in the woman's look; she had understood them by intuition in the carriage before she reached the house. She felt that every kindness she showed would seem but a sneaking hypocrisy, like the solicitude of an heir apparent. But she did her best, treating the Bash-Kadin with almost royal deference, easing her silken pillow with more silken tenderness, and murmuring words of hope and good cheer.

Tortured with her own impossible position, Miruma turned to Jebb with a halting:

"What please am I to say or to do, Jebb Effendim?"

Even Jebb could feel the sultry oppression in the air, but he knew of no way of relief except to save the woman's life.

"If you will ask her my questions, and tell me her answers—please—Hanum Effendi—madame."

Her eyes gleamed at his remembering her liking for "madame," and he felt that she smiled under her yashmak. But she answered solemnly enough:

"Please to ask me, and I ask the poor hanum."

"Ask her where her pain is greatest."

Miruma put the question in Turkish of evident circumlocution. For answer Nahir raised her right hand heavily and placed it at the base of her breast.

Jebb placed under the heavily coated tongue a thermometer he had borrowed from Murison. Then he took her pulse. He found her temperature high, her pulse feeble but swift.

"Ask her how long she has been ill."

After cross-examination, Miruma answered:

"She say she is seek for very, very long times. She have great fever in the night. In the morning she is better, but not well; in the morning she can eat some little, but later nothing at all."

"Ask her what treatment she has had."

Miruma bent close to hear the thin voice of Nahir. Then she interpreted:

"She say she have had the prayers of the dervish sheikh, breathings, and the *nushka*. She have these to please her old slave who is superstitious. Also, she have two Turkish doctors, who is here but did went away, and she have Doctor Murison effendi. They all say she have *humma*—how to say, a *fièvre*. They geee her of bitter medicines. But she is get no better."

After further minute examination and tests and endless questions, he nodded his head with decision.

"You have finded the evil?" Miruma asked eagerly.

He nodded again, and went into the hall where the pasha sat running through his fingers the chain of prayer beads, each bead one of Allah's nine and ninety perfections. The pasha rose to his feet, anxious with questions. Miruma translated Jebb's diagnosis of "gastric erosion."

Miruma's brows were sweet with sympathy. She explained as best she could the deep-seated and gnawing evil and the operation Jebb declared immediately necessary if Nahir Hanum's agony was to be ended and her life

saved. The old pasha became a child with fear and grief, groaning: "*Vakh! Eyvah!* and *Vay!*" and many a Turkish "Alas!"

He plucked his beard in mourning, and sent his lean hands to and fro among his beads, as if they prayed for him. But at last Jebb and Miruma brought him back to hope, and he gave his consent to the terrifying knives.

Miruma had shown such calm, such gentleness in the presence of her rival, and such courage, that Jebb felt her qualified in spirit, if not in training, to be the elder wife's best nurse.

He said:

"I need some one to care for Nahir Hanum afterward—to help me. Will you?"

Had the pasha been less engrossed in his own griefs, he might have seen his junior wife crowd a soul full of devotion into one answering look. Had Nahir Hanum seen that look she would have suspected Miruma's designs upon her pasha no longer.

Miruma did not trust herself to speak. She shook her head. And Jebb understood her Turkish consent. He took refuge from her gaze in a brusque:

"And now I must find Murison. Explain it to the pasha, please—madame."

Then he told Miruma all the things he would require to turn the house into a hospital and bring it as near to aseptic conditions as he could expect in such a place. As he hurried down the steps he paused again to call back:

"Take command 'o the house, madame—and the servants."

He descended a few steps and stopped again to say more gently:

"We both—you and I—want Nahir Hanum to get well, don't we?"

All he saw of her face were her eyes. They were enough. They widened and deepened with understanding of an inner meaning he had hardly realized himself till the moment. In a seizure of confusion he dashed from the house.

He hastened to find Murison, losing himself in blind alleys, almost bowling over black-clad, veiled figures, shoving gypsy beggars aside, cutting under the very noses of horses, and braving the



*His smile turned to a grimace of pain as Jebb answered crisply: "Twelve hundred pounds."*

horns of restive buffaloes. Murison's home was empty, and the Albanian servant could not understand a word Jebb said.

Frantic with impatience, he hailed a passing *talika*, and ordered the driver to make haste to the Austrian consulate.

He found Hellwald at the door and was invited to join him in coffee, but he explained his urgent need of Murison. Hellwald had seen him a moment before on his way to the British consulate, and offered to go along to show the way.

When he learned the cause of Jebb's speed he clapped him on the shoulder.

"*Himmelswillen!* But you will be rich in a day, Doctor Yep. Fehmi Pasha is made of money. He's an old skinflint, but you should tap him well! How much did you ask him?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing! Are you crazy? You must make a big bargain with him."

"I haven't the time. Afterward, perhaps."

"Afterward is too late."

"The woman is dying. I must operate at once. And such a beautiful operation! An operation in the stomach itself. Do you understand? It's a very rare piece of work. I've only had it twice before."

"All the more reason for a beautiful fee. Really, my boy, you must."

"There's Murison! He just turned the corner."

And Jebb deserted him incontinently.

He was thinking of a deal more than the operation or the money. His heart was pounding in his ears "Miruma! Miruma!" The sight of her, the being with her, hearing her, watching her

great soul on trial proving itself wonderful, had engulfed him deeper than ever in the thought of her.

When he left Fehmi Pasha's roof it had swept over him that a failure to save Nahir's life meant surrendering Miruma into the hands of Fehmi Pasha. He could see his skinny talons caressing her as if she were his gold.

He was the more eager to have Murison's Scottish calm to steady him, lest his fierce desire set his nerves in un-surgeonly disorder.

He came up with Murison, and told him breathlessly what he wanted. The fellow countryman of the poet who grieved over a frightened field mouse needed no urging. He said that he had himself been called in to prescribe for Nahir Hanum but had come to no nearer diagnosis than typhoid fever, which did not materialize; malaria, which did not respond to his quinine; and consumption, for which he knew no relief. He had never heard of Jebb's empyema, but he was convinced because Jebb was convinced.

On their way they stopped at the *ejza-hanè* or drug bazaar, but its stock was chiefly filled with things that were just out or had never been in.

They stopped at Murison's home to get the case of instruments, sutures, gauze, and everything his little equipment provided. Then they quickened their steps to the *konak* of Fehmi Pasha. As they neared it they saw a stream of women entering the gate in the wall, and other women coming out.

"What does that mean?" Jebb asked.

Murison answered solemnly: "They must be the women of the neighborhood. When they hear that a woman is dying they go into the sick room, strangers and all, without ceremony, and kneel there to pray for her repose, just as strange men help to carry the coffin to the grave."

"But she isn't going to die," Jebb insisted. "I'm not going to let her die." And he thought of Miruma as much as of Nahir.

He knocked at the door and was admitted by a servant who had been weeping. He went up the stairs with as

businesslike an air as if he were in an American home, and marched straight into the sick room, beckoning the uneasy Murison to follow. He paused at the door, for the room was filled with heavily veiled women surrounding the bed, where Nahir, feeling grateful to her anonymous comforters, was also praying. With her right hand raised, the forefinger pointing upward, she faintly murmured her testimony that there is but one God and Mahomet his prophet.

Her hand fell of its own weakness before she finished the long ritual. Jebb stood irresolute at the door, angered at the resignation which would not help him in his battle. Murison stood by him, feeling a reverence that Jebb could not respond to. It was Murison's profession to make death easy and beautiful. It was Jebb's to fight it to the last.

Hearing a rustle, he turned to find Miruma with her hands full of fresh linen. She was still occupied with the tasks he had set her.

He pointed to the premature mourners and spoke gruffly:

"Get 'em out! She must not be allowed to give up. She must help us make her live."

Miruma put down her burden, and, going among the kneeling women, whispered gently to them. They rose and withdrew—almost with disappointment, as it seemed to Jebb. When they had gone Jebb forgot them. He turned to Miruma:

"You have boiled water in plenty?"

"Yes, Jebb Effendim."

"Will you please take some of it in a clean bottle and let it cool on ice if you can. Is there ice?"

"Yes, Jebb Effendim."

"Where is the pasha?"

"I deed advised him to go to the mosque to pray for Nahir Hanum, and to take weet him his three sons who deed come home to help their mother to die in peace and to exchange the *hclal* weet her."

"You are a genius," Jebb said.

She was not quite sure what a genius might be, but Jebb's look was so warm

with admiration that she fled in terror. A compliment is a dangerous thing in Turkey. It makes the genie jealous.

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### A DUEL WITH THE CUPBEARER.

At Jebb's request, and with the pasha's authority, Miruma had taken command of the house. The old house-keeper, and all the other servants, seeing in her their probable future mistress, trod upon one another to please her. There were many of them and she set them flying in all directions.

First, she ravished the entire supply of the household's linen and had it transported to the upper floor, where it was put to baking in every utensil she could gather. She invaded the kitchen building in the garden, won over the savage negress in charge, and persuaded her to put her copper kettles and earthen jars at her disposal. In the hall the old coffee woman was heating water for scouring floors and tables. And on the two American stoves above stairs and below and on every foot warmer she could find she had some vessel boiling or baking fabrics, instruments, utensils.

The eldest son's room had been emptied of all its furniture and scoured with boiling water—floor, walls, windows. A long table from the kitchen, scoured and scoured again, had been taken thither by the porter.

Jebb found the whole household in an orderly commotion. The bathroom in marble, but tubless, had been set apart for him. He and Murison retired there to prepare themselves for the task. They slipped off their street clothes and put on two newly baked house robes and two pairs of baked slippers. Then they began on their hands.

He worked over his hands and his finger nails as if they were his most dreaded enemies. He made Murison, also, parboil and scrape his hands till they were almost raw.

To the eyes of the sick woman the doctor and his aid looked less like human beings than like the two dread

angels, Moonkir and Nehir, who sit at the foot and the head of a fresh grave to catechize the soul on trial. Nahir Hanum feared them as much as her feeble strength permitted.

Miruma was begging her to wish to live and try to live, for the sake of the children who needed her and the husband who loved. She was so gentle and so eager that Nahir Hanum was almost persuaded to believe her.

Jebb, entering the hanum's room, found there a covey of terrified daughters who had stolen in for further prayers. He scattered them like partridges, and, gathering the frail form of Nahir Hanum into his arms, carried her into the operating room.

Miruma waited outside, trying to comfort the ancient baby the pasha had become through fear. It seemed an eternity of waiting. Through the closed door came occasionally a quick murmur of Jebb's voice giving some command to Murison, the click of an instrument laid down or dropped on another. That was all for ages of suspense.

Then the door was opened, and Jebb reappeared with the unconscious form of the pasha's wife in his arms.

He carried his burden to her room and restored her to her canopied and coquettish bed from Paris. After a long while, she came back to consciousness. Her great, dreamy eyes glowed through her veil in questioning patience. A phrase came to Jebb from his Turkish grammar, the greeting the Osmanli bestow on one who has come safely through a sickness:

*"Gechmis ola! May it be past and forgotten!"*

Her eyes showed that she understood. She was too weak to feel much, but what little she felt was better than the great fear that had possessed her.

There were anxious hours and days of danger and of wrestle with the cup-bearer of the sphere who kept setting his fatal cup to the lips of Nahir Hanum. But Jebb thrust it aside always with his skill. But there were times when Miruma, alone in the house in the dreary night hours, must give battle herself with the dark angel.

It was not altogether an unselfish fight he waged, or altogether a selfish. She sought to remember all of Jebb's confusing directions and when, the next day, she would report to him what had happened, and could point to her ward still living, her triumph was sweetened by the admiration that grew in his eyes and deepened into a warmer approval than respect.

He never failed to give her her meed of praise, or to report to the pasha how unwearingly his second wife was defending his first wife from the incessant dangers hovering about her.

"You should be the only wife of a doctor, madame," he told her one day, and then blushed to realize how much his words implied.

And she blushed with him; then sighed to think how far from out of her reach this cup of happiness was held.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### AN EXILE FROM EDEN.

It was a long and busy week before Jebb felt that Nahir Hanum could safely be intrusted to the care of Miruma and Murison, though he had schooled them in all the tasks and problems that were likely to arise. Meanwhile, Gani Bey was flourishing in the radiant household of his father and mother, the British consul was again out-swaggering the Russian consul in the streets of Uskub, the Serb's sick buffalo no longer leaned on its yoke to cough, and various and sundry beggars, beys, and aghas were the better for Jebb's visit. • He felt that he had a right to set about his own business.

It had been a busy week in Turkey, too. Abdul the Damned had been plucked from his throne like a vulture dragged from a charnel nest. The Young Turks governed a new Turkey.

Jebb called upon the pasha, and, after as much delicacy of palaver as his curt soul could manage, he broached the hateful subject of compensation. The pasha's coffee cup shook, and he choked a little on his smoke. He recovered sufficiently to say with a rather restrained enthusiasm:

"Your servant can never repay you for your service by mere paras and piastras, Jebb Effendim, but may he ask what you would consider a fair recompence?"

His smile turned to a grimace of pain as Jebb answered crisply:

"Twelve hundred pounds."

The pasha translated it into his own terms:

"*Biñ iki yûz lira!*" He nearly rolled off the divan. "It is the price of the wife herself."

"You have your wife back from the edge of the grave, haven't you?" said Jebb. "It was a hard fight."

"Oh, yes, Jebb Effendim. You have accomplished a miracle. But twelve hundred pounds is much money for a physician."

"Is it much for a wife?"

"No, no, but—"

"Of course, if the pasha is poor, let us say no more. I have cured beggars in Uskub from whom I asked nothing except their thanks."

The pasha loved the reputation for money almost more than the money. He wriggled a little.

"No, no, your servant is not so rich as some men, but he is not so poor as others. But twelve hundred pounds for a week's labor. Why, look, effendim, when the padishah—whom Allah preserve—presented me with Miruma Hanum he gave me for her *nekyah* only one thousand pounds for her whole lifetime."

Having led him into the noose, Jebb tightened it with a sudden turn:

"I will throw off one thousand pounds of my bill, pasha, if you will release Miruma Hanum and restore her *nekyah*."

The pasha was too full of astonishment to have room for wrath. He sputtered:

"You ask me to—to divorce my wife?"

"Your extra wife."

"But wh-why? Do you want to marry her?"

"If I wanted to marry her, should I be leaving Uskub to-morrow forever?"

One thunderbolt followed another about the pasha's head.

"You leave Uskub forever. What of my poor sick wife? You will leave her to die?"

Jebb had foreseen the question, and he had planned his answer with care, composed it in French and rehearsed it. He spoke with less than his usual stumbling.

"The best thing I can think of to cure your wife, pasha, would be the news that she no longer has a young and beautiful rival. If you went to her, and said, 'You are my only wife now,' it would be better than any medicine I could prescribe. I put a knife almost in her heart. You have left one there. Give Miruma Hanum the *talag* and you will save Nahir Hanum."

The pasha was breathing deeply and his eye was soft.

"And," Jebb added, "you will save one thousand pounds of my fee."

Even greed was less strong than curiosity. The pasha studied Jebb closely as he asked:

"But why—what difference does it make to you?"

It was well that Jebb's profession had taught him in many a crisis to keep his emotions out of his features, for he said with perfectly level look and tone:

"It is a whim of mine, pasha. Besides, it is my duty. I see Nahir Hanum heartbroken by the presence of another woman in your life. She is the mother of your children. It is horrible, to my American notion, that a man should have two wives. Most of your Turkish people feel the same way. The padishah gave you your second wife. The padishah is deposed, exiled from Constantinople. A better man rules in his place. You are paying me to bring health into your home. Make Nahir Hanum happy, you will make her well.

"As for Miruma Hanum, she has worked hard for your wife. She is worn out with watching and with sleeplessness and labor. Without her your Nahir Hanum would have died many times in my absence. As a physician I

hate to see a human life wasted. Miruma Hanum should be a true wife, she should be a mother. Set her free. It ought to be your pleasure; it is your duty. And it will save you one thousand pounds."

The pasha was still craftily looking for some occult purpose. He had not been trained to believe in straightforward dealing or direct bargains.

"You are sure you do not intend to marry Miruma Hanum?"

"I leave Uskub to-morrow. I shall not return. I have business in Salonica and in other cities, and then I return to America. I have no expectation of ever seeing Miruma Hanum, or you, or any one in Uskub again."

He looked the pasha in the eyes as he spoke and there was no questioning the honesty of his intention.

"Let me think it over," the pasha pleaded.

"I leave Uskub to-morrow," Jebb reiterated as he rose.

"Another cup of our miserable coffee," the pasha urged, pressing him back in his seat.

The pasha sipped two cups and puffed yards on yards of smoke before he spoke. Then he said:

"You think my wife Nahir is well enough to leave?"

"With the instructions I have given him, Murison Effendi, with the aid of Miruma Hanum, can bring her back to health in two or three months."

"You think it will help her to recover if I inform her that I shall put away the gift-wife?"

"It will help more than all my skill."

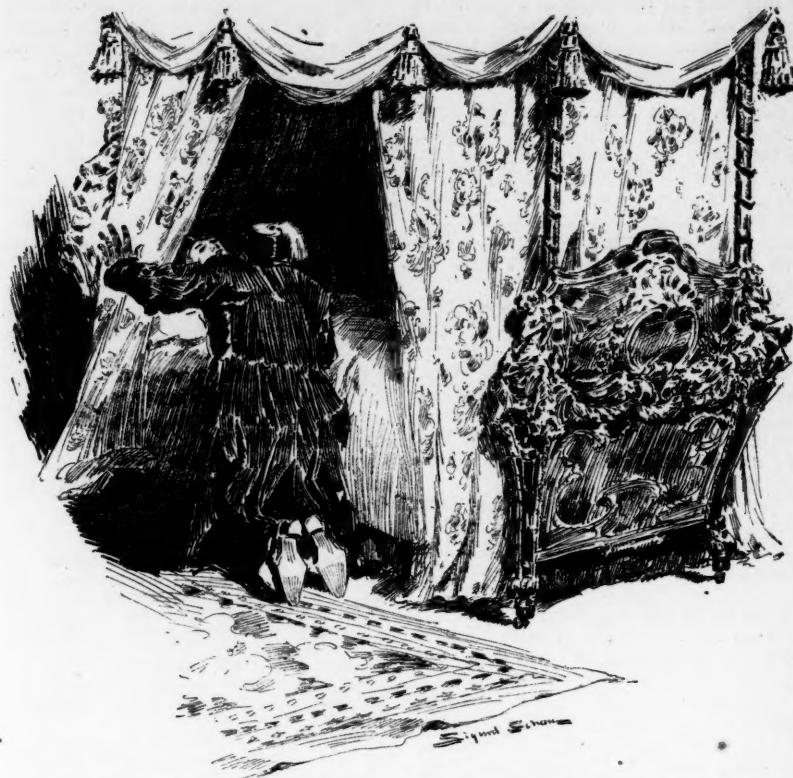
"Then your servant will obey your instructions in everything."

"And Miruma Hanum shall have her *talag* and her *nekyah*?"

"On my honor, and as soon as the court will grant the decree." And once more: "You are sure you are leaving Uskub forever?"

"To-morrow without fail. If you could have my money at my hotel——"

"It will be there, effendim. For your skill I shall pray Allah also to reward you. For your journey *Allaha emanet oloun*."



*Taking one of Nahir's wisplike hands, the old pasha poured out a stream of loverly Turkish.*

Thus commended to Allah, Jebb paid a last visit to Nahir Hanum and through the pasha warned her to keep her bed for two months at the least. She looked so wan and hopeless at this sentence that Jebb turned to the pasha and nodded to him meaningfully, and murmured:

"Tell her."

The old pasha dropped down at the side of the foreign and frivolous bed, and, taking one of Nahir's wisplike hands to his lips, poured out a stream of loverly Turkish; Jebb understood only a phrase of it here and there, but he caught the words "Miruma" and "talag," and through the transparent

veil on the waxen features there spread a sudden gleam.

In the eyes shining through the rift in the veil, there grew tears, large blinding tears; but they seemed to bless rather than burn, and as Jebb bowed himself out, her eyes followed him with a look he always remembered. That was a fee he could never spend.

As he passed from the house he looked eagerly about for Miruma, hoping that she might chance to be there and that he might bid her at least a farewell of the eyes. But she did not know, and he did not dare ask to see her lest the royal privileges he had enjoyed as a physician be withdrawn and

he find himself abhorred as an invader of the sacredness of a Turkish home. So he left the *konak* of Fehmi Pasha with a great heart-hunger unpeased.

He had, indeed, as he had said, resolved to leave Uskub forever, and Miruma forever. The fierce demands of his duties to the lost child cried out against him for his long neglect, but he felt absolved to a degree by the necessity of earning funds and saving the lives perishing at his very feet. But now there was no further excuse to give his conscience.

He had come to know Miruma better, through the veil, the actual veil she wore and the impalpable yet impenetrable veil her self-respect, her duty, the danger of their situation drew about her. And he had come to love her and desire her with a passion his heart had never dreamed itself capable of entertaining.

For a few days his dreams took wings. He had devised his plot for her release from the useless chain that fastened her to Fehmi Pasha. He planned to hurry forth to hunt the lost child. He dreamed that he stumbled upon her without delay. He imagined himself telegraphing Miruma to join them and go with him to America as his wife.

His heart was lonely for a helpmeet. His life was as empty as hers. They belonged to each other. He thanked the very fates that brought them together through the wilderness of the world.

And then his thanks choked in his throat. A chill hand seemed to reach from the fog and throttle him. It was his curse that had brought him to Uskub with infinite disgrace, with a deep shame, which he had concealed only by cowardly silences.

His curse forbade him to marry any woman, least of all Miruma. For a black long night he wrestled with the genie from the bottle and the morning found him a victor, though his triumph had cost him a broken heart and a broken life.

Utterly convinced that he would be an odious villain to marry Miruma, he felt it his absolute duty to check the

young love he had seen spreading into fuller bloom in her heart at every one of their meetings, though so few words were said, so few looks exchanged.

Jebb was a surgeon. He believed in the knife only as a last resort, but then he believed in cutting deep and once for all. It had been his horrible office to read a death warrant to many a wretch he could not save, and he had come to believe that the anguish was only prolonged and embittered by postponements and evasions.

He thought long and fiercely over his farewell to Miruma. He wrote many letters and tore them in pieces and burned them in his lonely room at the Hotel Turati with its window opening on a neglected graveyard. Worn out and nauseated with life, he dashed off and sealed the curtest message of all, with no hint of the love that neither had expressed in a word, and both had understood with all their hearts.

#### MIRUMA HANUM,

MADAME: I leave for Salonica by the next train. I shall hunt for the child until I find her. I will let you know when I do. Fehmi Pasha has promised me on his honor that he will grant you at once a *talaq* and restore your *nekyah* in full. I should like to be assured of this. You might send me word, if it is not too much trouble. My permanent address will be the Union Bank, I Graber 13, Vienna (Viyana), Austria.

With all good wishes, yours faithfully,  
DAVID JEBB.

He slipped this into his pocket and left the hotel. The streets of Uskub are lighted only for a while of evenings, and only an infrequent patrol or a hungry dog disturbed the night. Jebb easily avoided the patrol and found his way by starlight to the slumbrous home of Miruma.

He paused in the shadow of the wall opposite and mused on the chain of events that had brought him in a night of storm to her door. It was another man than himself that had taken that wild vagary. He must retrace him through the labyrinth without a thread to guide him. It was another man than the old Jebb who stood before her door now and ached with desire to remain, or to take back to his own coun-

try the treasure he had happened upon in the labyrinth.

In one of the windows there was a faint glimmer struggling through the lattices. He imagined Miruma there, and he believed that she was thinking of him. Mad projects to climb to her window like a *Romeo*, or to knock at her door like a minstrel, teased him, but he was not mad enough to attempt them.

It was late when the light from within was extinguished, and the window was only a blur in the starlight. Still he waited, helpless to move, till in the distance he heard the tag-tag of an approaching patrol. Then he slunk away, stumbling as he gazed back at the dim and dwindling walls of her home.

The porter at the hotel was half asleep as he opened the door, and left him to grope to his room and throw himself down on the bed of loneliness and despair.

The next morning, as he was paying his farewell calls on Hellwald and Mu-rison and other friends, he saw Djaffer passing with a *botchka* or parcel carrier loaded with purchases from various bazaars.

Djaffer salaamed as to a grand vizier. Jebb paused ostensibly to examine the bandage on the wrist. He slipped Djaffer the money to redeem his ring, and made him promise to have it at the hotel that day. Djaffer promised with a grinning gratitude that died out suddenly, for Jebb had secretly pushed his farewell letter up the sleeve of Djaffer's coat and as he moved away whispered:

"Miruma Hanum."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### JEBB FINDS HIMSELF.

Salonica, the Hot Springs of ancient Greece, the neighbor of Mount Olympus where the twelve gods resided; the rendezvous of the unimaginable army and navy of Xerxes; rebuilt and renamed by Alexander the Great's brother-in-law for Alexander's half-sister Thessalonica; Thessalonica where St. Paul preached and whence he

was driven away by "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort"; Salonica, the immemorial memorial of Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, and Saracen antiquities.

It seemed pretty ancient to the Yankee surgeon who came in an express train and took a cab to the Grand Hôtel d'Angleterre.

The hundred-and-fifty-mile journey had required only eight hours, which was not bad for Turkey, but the train would not leave the banks of the river Vardar, the doleful reminder of Uskub. It followed the winding channel incessantly, through mountains and hills, and through the gorge of the "Iron Gate."

Jebb sought nepenthe from his gloom in studying the Turkish grammar Hellwald had given him to keep. Hellwald and the British consul had also helped him over the important matter of his missing papers, had provided him with a substitute for his lost passport and a *teskeré*, or license to travel; had coached him in the important intricacies of Turkish machinery, and given him cordial letters to the representatives of Great Britain and Austria in Salonica.

He had bought in Uskub only a hand bag, a razor, and the necessary linen, and the customs officer found nothing to confiscate except Jebb's tip. When he left the train he was compelled to have his *teskeré* viséed by a Turkish official who took it in charge until he should leave the town again.

After he had engaged his cabman, Jebb was struck with an idea, and, hurrying back to the recorder, asked in limping Turkish:

"Will the effendi look through his papers and see if by chance he is holding another *teskeré* of mine?"

He did not fail to slip a little baksheesh under the documents on the desk. The recorder ransacked his files graciously, but was finally compelled to conclude:

"Daveet Jebb Effendi could not have passed through Salonica—at least not openly and legally."

Jebb dissipated the menace of this suggestion with a further insinuation

of baksheesh and hastened to his cab. If he could have found his *teskeré*, he would have known just when and whence he had arrived in Salonica, and whether or not the child had been with him.

It was black night when his cab rumbled along the commendable pavements of Salonica, and deposited him at the Grand Hôtel d'Angleterre. A drowsy clerk piloted him to a room, lighted candles for him, and opened one eye just wide enough to satisfy himself that his baksheesh was sufficient.

Jebb went to bed and fell asleep, weighed down by every exhaustion. He slept through the muezzin's call at dawn and halfway to the noon *eulam*. When he woke at last the air was crisp, and liquid with the songs of birds. He looked from his window across a plain of gay red roofs above latticed windows in white walls, cross-channeled with white streets where elms, mulberries, and cypress were aligned. Here and there mosque domes curved like clustered bubbles; here and there stood the tall lance of a minaret.

But there were so much sunlight and beauty in the world that despair vanished from his spirits like a sleep. He bathed, and shaved, and dressed with speed, hurried down to the dining room, hurried through his breakfast, and hurried out to deliver his letters of introduction and set in motion the hunt for Cynthia.

At the Austrian consulate Jebb was received with the distinction due his recommendations as a friend and a physician. And he was invited to cure the stubborn cough of the consul's daughter. He also learned that every effort to trace the missing child had ended in negation.

He visited the American mission and his ears were charmed with the familiar twang, but no good news.

At the British consulate they had much proffer of aid but no encouragement. One of the attachés, a younger son of a noble house, but smothered under the simple style and title of Cranford Banbury, Esquire, was especially courteous. He said:

"My eldest brother, who wears the title, you know, almost married an American actress once, and I was within an ace of being sent to our New York consulate, so that makes us pretty nearly cousins or something or other, doesn't it? Besides, you Yankees have been so polite to all our friends who have gone to the States that I feel it my duty to be decent to any poor devil who has to stop off at this Godforsaken end of the world. The first man to see is the police commissioner."

He took Jebb to the office of the *polis gomisóri*, introduced him, and translated the commissioner's account of his vain efforts to find the child. Various awkward gaps in Jebb's story were bridged over by Banbury, whose official position and whose indignation at any impertinence kept the official quelled.

Banbury had many suggestions, sought many people, quizzed shopkeepers, passers-by, priests of every religion, even the Jewish bootblacks, but no one had heard of any lost child whose parents had not speedily been found.

He insisted on Jebb's dining with him and revealed all that exquisite English hospitality which is as cautious as it is complete, once it is extended.

"You're in a blue funk, old man, and you oughtn't to be alone."

"I'm always alone," said Jebb grimly.

"Well, I'll do my best to make Salonica an exception. There's not much to occupy an Anglo-Saxon in Salonica unless you're interested in politics. We rather feel we're sitting on dynamite. The Young Turks are in power, but they have an Augean stable to clean up, and the old sultan isn't dead yet."

"What have they done with him?"

"Why, haven't you heard? He's here—here in Salonica. Fact! They bundled him out of Constantinople, bag and baggage, with a reduced regiment of wives, and plonked him down in the south side of our town. He is a kind of prisoner *de luxe*, settled in a wonderful villa built ten years ago by an Italian for the Allatini family. He has made two or three attempts to escape, and there have been mysterious

chalk marks on the houses. People fear an explosion every moment. But let's not talk Turkish politics. I hear nothing else all day. Let's go to a *café chantant*."

"A *café chantant* in Salónica?"

"Yes, and on the very spot where St. Paul is said to have preached, by Jove! There are six other spots that claim the same glory, but none of them is probably within a mile of it. Will you come along?"

"Anything to get my mind off my troubles."

"Your troubles will only begin, my boy, when you hear the music. A stranded troupe of tenth-rate Italian opera singers is trying to earn money enough to get back to Milan. God knows I want to help them out of this town."

The admission was only two piastres or ten cents apiece.

Banbury chose a table, and the waiter brought them coffee. Banbury rejected it with horror and ordered Scotch and soda, in which Jebb begged to be excused from joining him.

The singers were not so bad as their poverty implied, and even the thin Italian harmonies had a glorious richness in Jebb's ear, sick of the dolorous squawk and squeal of the shepherds and bagpipers about Uskub.

The crowd was motley, and a few dignified Young Turkish officers made a distressing contrast with a number of drunken English sailors ashore from a cruiser.

At a table in front of him, Jebb noticed a fat neck and short, bristly poll of distinctly French extraction. Eventually their owner turned his face, glanced at Jebb, stared, turned away, turned back, looked uneasy, angry, pugnacious, puzzled.

Jebb wondered what ailed the man. He was sure he had never seen him before. At length the stranger rose and left the hall, and Jebb gave his soul to the "Miserere" from "Il Trovatore." It had a new sound here in Macedonia, and somehow he felt that he was himself the man imprisoned and crying from the tower of his doom, and that

the woman who bade him farewell was Miruma.

He was absorbed so deeply in the music that he failed to notice at first the arrival of a Turkish police officer who spoke deferentially to Banbury. Jebb turned in surprise and found the officer regarding him with a piercing scrutiny, which Jebb answered with a clear-eyed innocence of ignorance. Banbury had been melting sympathetically under the influence of Scotch and Verdi, but he was instantly filled with an Englishman's rage at any invasion of his privacy.

Jebb caught a word here and there and gleaned that the conversation had to do with a French hotelkeeper named Moosoo Carolet, some other person named Pierpont, and an unpaid bill.

Banbury grew more and more furious as he thundered Turkish with a curious British intonation. The officer grew more and more humble, and finally withdrew in confusion with much apology and many a salaam.

When he had gone Banbury said: "This is the most ghastly country in God's world. What do you suppose that jackass of a policeman wanted? It would be no end funny if it weren't so disgustingly impertinent. It seems that some silly ass of a French hotelkeeper here had a guest named Pierpont who lived very royally for a few days, then skipped without stopping to pay the shot. This jackanapes sees you and thinks you are Pierpont. He goes to the police and orders your arrest.

"Fortunately you were with me or God knows what they would have done to you. You'd have spent the rest of your life in the White Tower perhaps. The officer came to me with apologies for throwing a friend of mine into a dungeon as a common thief and I sent him about his business."

"That's mighty nice of you," said Jebb.

Jebb considered the incident closed and he returned to the music. Suddenly he gave a start, controlled himself, and puffed much smoke before he inquired idly:



*It was momentum rather than any fool-hardy bravery that forced him to leap at the murderous lady and wrestle with her for her revolvers.*

"By the way, what was the name of the hotel?"

"The Grand Hotel de—something or other. I don't remember. Don't think of it again, I beg you."

But Jebb thought of it without rest. At length Banbury rose impatiently. The Scotch had made him drowsy, but he blamed the music.

"I can't stand any more of this caterwaul; can you? What do you say to our getting out? I'll drop you at your hotel, eh?"

"Thank you, I think I'll see it through. Almost any music sounds good to me now."

"Very well, I'll wait if you want to."

"Please don't let me keep you."

It took much delicate management, but Banbury was very sleepy and at last permitted Jebb to bid him good night. As soon as he was out of the building, Jebb rose and searched for the policeman. He was greeted by him with profound courtesy.

Jebb had been mulling the affair over in his head, and he was able to ask in intelligible if inelegant Turkish:

"Will you please tell me the name of the hotel kept by Musu Carolet."

"The Grand Hôtel de l'Europe, ef-fendim. He is a dog of a fool to have suspected you."

Jebb bowed and murmured: "Good-by." And the official answered: "You are welcome."

Jebb sauntered carelessly out of the café and, calling a cab, said:

"Grand Hôtel de l'Europe."

Arriving there, he told the man to wait. He found the office alight and Monsieur Carolet talking excitedly to a lady who was presumably Madame Carolet.

The man stared at Jebb with a dismay that seemed to expect at least a challenge to a duel.

Jebb had rehearsed his French in the cab, and he began smoothly:

"Is it not that monsieur thought I had been at his hotel?"

"It is that I was sure of it, monsieur. You have the air exactly of the miserable pig-dog of a Pierpont. I see now that you are not the man—he was much thinner and not at all like you. I apologize humbly."

"When was it that it was that Mr. Pierpont was here?"

"It was two weeks, monsieur. He arrives in state. He seems to have a little too much of the gin or the wiskee, but we others always expect that in the English and Americans, isn't it? He orders the best room in the house, the best food, and he drinks much of the wiskee. Then one day—his room is empty. He does not come back."

"How much was his bill?"

"Five pounds Turkish."

"Is it that he left of the baggage?"

"No, monsieur. Ordinarily, I should have collected in advance, but he was

so magnificent that I did not dare it. He brought nothing with him. He said he expected his yacht to come for him. As for some fresh linen he bought of it here in the shops, and threw the old away."

Jebb smiled sadly. The portrait sounded familiar.

"Did Mr. Pierpont register?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"May I see the signature?"

"But yes, monsieur."

Madame Carolet whisked the little book from a drawer and Jebb recognized his own writing with a conflict of relief and shame. The name was Vanderbilt Pierpont, but the hand was the hand of Jebb.

"One more question. Did Mr. Pierpont have a child with him—a little girl?"

"No, monsieur, not one."

"You are sure?"

"Perfectly."

"What city did he come from?"

"He did not say, and he had nothing of baggage at all, monsieur. He talked very little and his tongue was a little thick."

"You have no idea where he was before he came here?"

"Absolutely none, monsieur."

"I will pay his bill."

"Pardon, monsieur."

"I will pay the bill."

"*Nom de Dieu*, you will pay the bill! But why should you, monsieur?"

"It is my whim. He was an American. I am an American. I wish to pay for the honor of the country. But if you would prefer not, I will not pay the bill."

"Oh, monsieur, I do not question you. I thank you."

Jebb paid the bill and went back to the cab with his receipt. He had found at least himself. So, the devil in him had taken the name of Vanderbilt Pierpont, and talked large and lived high. He shook his head helplessly, as a father might over the crimes of an incorrigible son.

But having found his alias, how was he to retrace his route? Long after midnight he sat in his room pounding

his forehead with his fist to beat out an idea. Finally one came like a spark from a smitten anvil.

"The *teskeré*!"

He could hardly endure the delay till morning, and he was waiting at the station when the recorder of passports arrived. Jebb wished him a very good morning and Allah's favor, and asked after the health of his parents, and hoped that his friends were well, and finally ventured to ask him to look through his files again and see if they contained perhaps a *teskeré* in the name of V. Pierpont. The recorder's face changed from suspicion to affability. Baksheesh did it.

And at length after much delay he unearthed the document.

"Yes, here is the permission for V. Pierpont Effendi to travel from Constantinople into the interior. It carries the *visé* of Salonica in the writing of my assistant. I was absent that day."

"May I ask the date, and the name of the man who issued the *teskeré*?"

The recorder held it out for him to see, and Jebb made a mental record of the name of the official and his address in Constantinople. He wanted to ask for the document itself, but he feared that even baksheesh might not reach so far. He could hardly control his excitement as he said:

"One more question, effendim: When is the next train to Constantinople? Shall I have time to go back to my hotel before it leaves?"

"I think so, effendim," smiled the Turk, "the next train to Constantinople runs three times every week, and the next train leaves to-morrow."

Another twenty-four hours of inaction! It seemed that he could not endure the delay. He was finished with Salonica, so impatient to be quit of it that he was tempted to set out for Constantinople on foot. He actually climbed the steep hillside, through the Turkish quarter, past the dreamy idlers drooling their *narghilehs* and sipping their coffee, past the lazy worshipers at the mosques, the yawning dogs, the veiled women dawdling the streets. Ev-

erything was indolent, and the leisurely serenity that had seemed Turkey's greatest charm at first was maddening now.

Little girls hung about the fountains filling their jugs, and Jebb saw a dozen times some profile, some little form that suggested Cynthia. But he was all too well assured that she was not in Salonica.

Late in the afternoon he reached the southern limits of the city where houses were few and fields broad. In the distance he saw a splendid palace in a great garden surrounded by a high wall. He skirted the edges and continued on his way till it began to grow dark. Seeing that the sunset was purpling Mount Olympus and that night would soon be upon him, he turned back.

He was startled by distant cries. He saw people running here and there. Suddenly a little veiled figure came out of the twilight and the shrubbery close to him. Jebb thought that some poor Turkish wife was fleeing from murder or persecution. He determined to offer her his protection. He ran toward her, shouting in English and in breathless Turkish. As he came up, the little veiled figure drew two revolvers and fired at him.

The bullets whirred past his ears. He would have been glad to retreat, but his impetus carried him forward, and it was momentum rather than any foolhardy bravery that forced him to leap at the murderous lady and wrestle with her for her revolvers, which continued to spit fire in a very feminine way and fortunately with feminine aim.

In the highly indecorous wrestle for life the fugitive's thick yashmak was torn loose, and Jebb saw to his infinite amazement that the little lady wore a heavy beard, and was really a little gentleman.

No longer restrained by motives of delicacy, Jebb kicked the old gentleman's heels from under him and plonched him on the turf, kneeling on his arms till he could wrest the revolvers loose.

The old man uttered violent things in a violent way, and then began to plead

shrilly. But Jebb had lost his Turkish along with his breath and his patience, and he simply held his prisoner fast, till the pursuers arrived, and, gazing with awe at the scene, poured forth horrified sentences in which Jebb caught the word: "Padishah!"

He nearly swooned as it came over him that the little old gentleman in the disheveled ferijé and veil was no less—and no more—than Abdul Hamid II.

### CHAPTER XIX. ON TO STAMBOUL.

Each of the breathless pursuers laid hold on the royal captive, till he looked as many-limbed as the spider he has been always called. Turning to Jebb, the Turks lifted, with such hands as were free, the imaginary dust of homage to their breasts and brows.

Then in a cloud of real dust a mounted officer thundered up. While the horse was still fighting the curb that brought it to a halt, the situation was explained to the rider in clamorous phrases.

He flung himself to the ground. Once dismounted, he peered hastily into the veils waddled about the prisoner's face, heaved a sigh of gigantic relief, and gasped:

*"Elhamdullah!"*

Having thanked Allah, he turned to Jebb and poured out in perfect French an effusion of personal gratitudes, and compliments, and hopes that his heart might be all right, and that Allah might send him blessed increase of wealth, and that his parents and all his friends were alive and well. He insisted that he was the dust under Jebb's feet, and introduced himself as Behalul Bey, a cavalry major of Binbashi detailed as the guardian of the sultan.

He was trembling, and a pale sweat was on his brow, for he had galloped in pursuit of his prisoner; his heart had galloped harder, realizing not only what blame this escape would bring upon his own head but what calamities upon his people.

As for the prisoner, he was as far

as possible from looking the rôle he played in the history and the legend of his long reign. His meager five feet of stature lost something further in his swaddling robe. The bulging brow over the vulture beak, and the large ears protruding from the swart skull, made him sinister enough. But the rouge on his high cheek bones, the stains of dye on his beard, and his female garb left him ridiculous.

Only the hysterical, senile frenzy of his struggles, his oaths, his invocations of the Allah whose shadow he had been on earth, revealed the soul that had shut itself in a silken web and sent forth spies and messengers of death along every gossamer thread. It was hard for Jebb to believe that millions of Turks should have endured for thirty-three years the despotism of this little red-fezzed perjuror, this throttler of liberties, this massacre of Armenians and prisoner of patriots, exiler of philosophers, this hoarder of gold, this craven who had feared for nothing except his own bodily security. He was so ludicrously impotent now that it seemed cruel even to recall his past.

Having no other occupation but conspiracy, and knowing that there were numbers of reactionaries outside to aid his restoration for their own ends, he had made attempt after attempt to escape. Lives had been lost in frustrating them, and the walls built higher and higher about him. But evidently a new scheme had ripened, for when the sputtering prisoner was searched with as much delicacy as was due his raiment and his station, Behalul Binbashi brought to light a crumpled paper.

By the flicker of a series of matches he found it to be a letter from Albanian sympathizers promising the sultan refuge and concealment till an army could be mustered to return him to the throne.

When Behalul had finished this document he gave a hasty order, and various followers who had come up on foaming horses set out to scour the region.

They had not beaten the thicket far when they started a human covey.

Darkling figures sprang up and ran in various directions. Some had been caught, some had escaped, when, with a great cracking of whips, a carriage dashed from hiding and went flying down the road. There was a furious gallopade and the pursuit vanished beyond a hill.

Later the carriage returned under escort. It was empty of passengers but loaded with arms.

The driver dropped from the box to the sultan's feet with heartbroken cries of distress and adoration. The tyrant has yet to be found who cannot procure devotion to the last. The weapons being removed, the sultan was humbly compelled into the carriage and driven slowly back to private life instead of forward into civil war.

Major Behalul asked Jebb to walk with him, and, giving his horse to a soldier to lead, trudged alongside Jebb.

When the Allatini villa was reached, and the sultan snugly restored to his nest, Behalul invited Jebb to enter the carriage with him, and returned him to his hotel in state.

That night he was called to the home of the most important men in Salonica. Other guests at dinner were a group of Young Turkish leaders. At Jebb's request Cranford Banbury was asked to attend as interpreter, though all of the Turks spoke French or German, and some of them English. The pride that Banbury took in seeing his protégé acclaimed as a savior of the nation, was recompense enough for the hospitality he had shown.

After a long and evidently flowery speech by a white-bearded Young Turk, who had spent part of his years in prison and part in exile, Banbury explained to Jebb:

"The upshot of the old gentleman's palaver is that they want you to name some reward for your wonderful *et cetera, et cetera*. What would you like most, my boy? The diamond star of the order of Nishani Osmanee, or a silver medal for saving life, or will you have it in cash?"

Jebb did not hesitate about his answer:

"Tell them about the lost child and ask them if they can give me any help."

Banbury drawled forth a long story, which seemed to touch the guests deeply, for when he finished they all spoke at once, and Cranford explained:

"They say that they promise you the aid of the whole nation, and that nobody in Turkey shall feel himself too high or too busy to join the search. But they want also to show you some personal favor."

While seeming to listen politely to the discourse of his hosts, and while nodding low every time he recognized his name, Jebb had been carrying forward in his imagination the consequences of this latest turn of fate. He saw his hasty act magnified into an event of wide notoriety. It would, probably, be cabled home that an American surgeon had prevented the Turkish emperor from escaping, as an American dentist had once aided a French empress in her flight. The newspapers would headline him for a few days and then drop him.

But the mother of Cynthia Thatcher would see the news and—what would she not think? Jebb had hoped that she would have given her child up as dead. Such a sorrow, bitter soever, would be less harrowing than the unendurable thought that the child was lost. He preferred that she should suffer the lesser torment until that glorious day when he should appear from the grave and place her child in her arms.

The publication of the news that Jebb was in Salonica capturing sultans would not only tear the mother's heart open afresh, but would set the police of America on his trail. There would be cablegrams, arrests, inquisitions, checks, suspicions at every step. No, he must do his work alone.

His studies in dissection had taught him to follow the thin white thread of a nerve through all its hiding places, all its ramifications, and he felt himself as well qualified to retrace his own steps as any of the stodgy police detectives he had ever met.

One thing he felt above all things

important—that his quest should not be interrupted. When, then, Cranford repeated the desire of the officials to show him some personal grace, the request was ready to his tongue:

"The greatest favor they can do me is to keep what I have done a secret, and, above all, not to let my name get into the papers."

"What is this?" gasped Cranford. "Modesty?"

"Partly," said Jebb; "not altogether."

Jebb's message was received with unexpected delight, and promises upon Turkish honor that no one should breathe Jebb's name for publication.

When the feast was finally done, and the elaborate ceremonials of parting completed, Cranford walked back to Jebb's hotel with him.

"Do you think they'll keep the thing secret?" Jebb asked anxiously.

"Never fear that they won't. They don't care to let the friends of the old spider know how near he came to getting away. If it hadn't been for a Yankee doctor happening along, he might have been in the arms of his supporters to-night, and nobody would know to-morrow whose head was safe. Trust them to keep that secret! But they can show their gratitude in no end of subterranean ways. They perfected their revolution in secret. They'll do everything for you that man can do. It is no end lucky for you to have Salonica in your favor."



Jebb intrusted his destinies to this man.

He went on to explain that Salonica was almost supreme at Constantinople since it was the khaki-clad regiments of Salonica that had forced the old sultan to restore the constitution, had quelled the mutiny he had set up among the troops that obeyed his whims, had captured the city to foil his plot to butcher the Christians, had solemnly deposed him and brought his amiable brother

out of long oblivion to be the servant of the constitution and the people. It was Macedonia that went over into Constantinople to help the people, and to be in favor at Salonica was to be doubly in favor at Stamboul.

Jebb slept well that night, for he had hope to soothe his pillow.

At the station, the next day, the Young Turk leaders gathered to wave him good luck.

And so he set forth on his twenty-four-hour journey to Constantinople and puffed at his cigar with his first genuine contentment, for he shuffled in his hands a sheaf of *buyuruldu*s—letters of commendation to some of the chief personages of the empire. The Jebb who left Salonica in state was not the Jebb who had stolen into the town, but it was yet a third Jebb he must stalk through Constantinople, the great chaos.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE MOTHER OF THE WORLD.

The train was only six hours late, so that instead of arriving in the early morning light Jebb came in the full glow of the afternoon. Disappointment met him at once.

Constantinople has been likened to a stage spectacle; from the water front it is impressive beyond words, but behind the scenes lies cruel disillusion. Jebb came by the alleyway to the stage door. The back yard of no city is its best advertisement, and Jebb's aesthetic faculties were less stirred than his aseptic soul was horrified. But Jebb's chief interest in Constantinople was that her police force might be modern enough to help him find the lost child or trace at least his own footsteps through the twisted streets.

Of this he had some hope, for he carried in his pocket documents that gave him freedom of the city. They had already worked magic with the customs inspector who had boarded the train. They promised great things for his other problems. When he descended from the sleeping car and fell among

the riotous Kurdish porters, blue-bloused, black-belted, and swarthy-faced, fighting for his hand bag, his heart sank.

But behind a grilled inclosure he found a dragoman whose cap wore the name of the Hotel Bristol, which Cranford had recommended. He intrusted his destinies to this man, and under his guidance showed his *teskeré* to the proper official, and gave the appropriate tip to the Kolji who pretended to inspect his baggage.

The dragoman led Jebb and the porter who carried his bag out into the noisy streets, through a whirlwind of newsboys howling *gazéas* of every language, even English. A red-fezzed cabman on the box of a rickety *araba* folded his newspaper and took up the lines. The dragoman gave him the destination and salaamed to Jebb, the *hamal* salaamed his thanks for the baksheesh, and the carriage whirled from the station.

And now Jebb was once more in Constantinople among strange perspectives, peculiar architecture, and an atmosphere that is all its own. He tried to remember some scene, catch some reminder that he had passed this way before, but that room of his mind would not open.

What chiefly overwhelmed Jebb was the hugeness of the city—as large as ten Salonicas or fifty Uskubs—as large as if Boston, San Francisco, and St. Louis faced each other in one mass.

Over its famously infamous pavements Jebb's *araba* grinded, till it tumbled onto the rough boards of the Galata Bridge afloat upon the oily waters of the Golden Horn. The great pontoon was thronged with every imaginable manner of man and woman—in every imaginable costume, from the half nakedness of children to the long robes of Arabs and the black wraiths of the veiled women.

There were European hats enough in the crowd, but they were worn by foreigners. Some of the hats were so American that Jebb looked under them, counting on finding a face he knew. It seemed impossible that such a mêlée

should not include some acquaintance of his.

His eyes darted here and there in the throng, as a fisher hangs over a stream with harpoon poised. He missed this face in looking for that, saw a friend at first glance, and at second glance saw not even a resemblance.

A derby hat unmistakably American caught his eye, and he turned to stare at it. At the same instant he heard a voice behind him, almost at his elbow:

"Hello, old man! How's electricity?"

He whirled so quickly that he nearly sprained his neck. He caught an over-the-shoulder grin and heard a Yankee chuckle. He could not recall the face or the voice, but the race was plainly his own.

The fellow countryman moved on through the crowd. Jebb stood up to identify the man, but saw only a glimpse of red hair. He was tempted to leap out and go in search. But a porter carrying two huge barrels on his shoulders drifted between, and hid the wayfarer from sight. Jebb sank back in the *araba*, cudgeling his memory.

Who was the red-headed man?

Why did he mention electricity?

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A NEW PLAN.

Leaving the sonorous bridge, the *araba* rolled into ancient Galata, watched over by the high-hilled tower that has shouldered into the sky since the people of Genoa ruled here, never dreaming that one of the Genoese should open a new world to the West.

Through the streets and shops of Galata and on up the hill into the district of Pera, the horses tugged.

Though the route lay eastward the progress was westerly, for here the clubs, the shops, the hotels, the homes were mainly European. Here were the embassies of the nations, each with its flag offering sanctuary to its citizens. And it was one of these flags that brought something gushing from Jebb's heart into his throat and on into his eyes, for he saw red and white stripes

billowing luxuriously and stars trembling in a blue field.

As the carriage passed the American embassy Jebb's homesick eyes drank in the beauty and meaning of the emblem. He looked back at it till the turn in the street hid it; and he was filled with a glad, sad longing, for he wondered when—if ever—he should dare return to the shelter of its folds.

With all his soul he wished that he had never left the shadow of the flag. And then with all his soul he recalled the futile wish, for he realized that without his adventure he would never have seen Miruma.

Jebb wondered where Miruma was now, what she was doing. He wondered if Fehmi Pasha were keeping his word, and how she would use her newfound freedom. He resolved to write to her; then he withdrew the resolution, fearing that his letter might embarrass her, might only awaken the regret he hoped she felt.

At length he arrived at his hotel, a porter seized his hand bag, and he dismissed the cab driver with his fare and sufficient baksheesh. It was most restful to be greeted in his own language and to make his wishes known without groping for Turkish, French, or German equivalents and substitutes.

His hotel was advertised as being the only one with an American elevator in place of a lift. The little soaring cage was like a touch of home. His room overlooked a cozy garden, and he sank in a chair to give himself just a moment's breathing while, before he opened his new campaign.

He ran over his letters of introduction again. He could not read the rolling arabesques running from right to left. He could read only the names and addresses, but one of them was to Shefket Pasha—the Iron Man, the Cromwell of the Revolution; others were Niazi and Enver Beys, the fiery soldiers whose photographs were everywhere—the matinée idols of the Turks. With such aids how could he fail?

But before all others Jebb had decided to hunt up the official who had issued to "V. Pierpont" his first *tes-*

keré to travel in Salonica. That was the inner end of the tangled cord he must unravel. When he inquired at his hotel where the bureau of the passports was to be found, he learned to his disgust that it was in the Zabtieh Nazareti, or ministry of police, and he must retrace all the distance he had come and more.

He picked up another *araba* and was jounced down the long hill, across the rattling bridge, and on through Stam-boul to the ancient Hippodrome, which marked his journey's end. All the way he had been rehearsing Turkish phrases under his breath, while his eyes fairly rummaged the crowds.

He had a very definite hope that amiable coincidence would bring the red-headed man across his path again. But coincidences will not coincide by request, and he got only his journey for his pains. The train's lateness and his own had brought him to the bureau after it had closed for the day.

He had the afternoon and evening to himself—very much to himself. He thought of his letters of introduction, but if it were too late for an official to be at his desk, it was too late for a stranger to call on a busy manager of a new empire. He thought of the American embassy, but he had a strong disinclination to visiting his own countrymen in his plight, at least before he had exhausted the dynamics of the new Turkish government in vain.

Impatience gadflied him into walking back to the hotel, and he could not resist the feeling that if only he walked far enough and saw people enough, he would encounter some one who would seize him and say:

"The lost child is waiting for you. Come with me."

To see and be seen was his ambition. He studied every face, started after every child. Again and again he was thrust through with joy as he heard Cynthia's little treble. But it was the cry of some Turkish or Armenian or Greek little girl. Again and again he thought he saw Cynthia disappear round a corner and he would quicken his pace almost to a run, always to find

that the child was nothing like his ward, or had vanished into some of the infinite retreats.

He bought a copy of the *Levant Herald* from a newsboy and picked up a few morsels of information as to what history had been making at home during his long exile. He sat and read it over a cup of coffee at a table on the sidewalk, then paid his host and pushed on, pausing for no mosque, museum, or bazaar, picking his way over the heaps of refuse, avoiding the huddles of sleeping dogs that preempted such sidewalks as barbers did not fill—the million ownerless mangy dogs that own Constantinople, foraging all day and barking all night.

Again he found himself on the Galata Bridge, a foot passenger in a swirling masquerade. He was always alert for the red-headed man who spoke of electricity, a subject of which Jebb knew as little as possible. He tried to dismiss him from his mind with the theory that the fellow had simply mistaken him for somebody else. But he could neither dismiss him nor discover him.

He dragged weary feet to his hotel, and fatigue spoiled a dinner that should have entranced him with its old-time dishes. He had an evening to kill, and Constantinople is poor in amusements of evenings.

He left the hotel and took the underground railway to the bridge, and watched the throngs again, seeking, seeking. On the surface of the Golden Horn the light caiques were darting here and there, the swallow-swift gondola canoes of this region. He resolved to indulge himself in the strange penpenthe that comes from gliding over the water.

He went to one of the landing stages and bargained with the two boatmen for an hour's stroll on the Bosphorus.

The two oarsmen bent to their work and the caique swooped forward with an unimaginable lightness and fleetness. Jebb forgot his fezzed gondoliers and stared dreamily at the triple city in panorama before him.

As he mused upon it, his hungry

heart returned more than ever to desiring Miruma. He remembered what she had said of the success he could make of his profession in Turkey, and the idea grew in his heart that the best arrangement he could make of his future was to return to Stamboul, after he had found Cynthia and given her back to her mother—to return to Stamboul and marry Miruma.

Under the benison of this reverie, the wonderfulness of Constantinople took on such a delirium of beauty that, when the caïque had returned him to shore, he rather floated than walked to his hotel, and never once thought of the red-headed man. He could have brushed elbows with him without seeing him, could have heard that quizzical voice again and never heeded it.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES.

The next morning Jebb repeated the pilgrimage from his hotel in Pera to the ministry of police in Stamboul. He arrived betimes, but again he found the bureau closed.

He demanded an explanation from a black-coated policeman with a fez for a helmet, and was answered in amazed Turkish:

"But it is *Jouma'a*, to-day."

"Friday! Oh, of course!"

"It is the sabbath of the Faithful."

"I understand. Pardon me."

"There are three sabbaths a week here, effendim. To-morrow is the sabbath of the Jews, and a bootblack will not touch your shoes that day. The day after that is the sabbath of the Christians."

Jebb wished him well with Allah and turned away. This Constantinople was getting on his nerves. How was he ever to find whence he had come on his first visit here? He faced another long ennuï of waiting for another day and night to pass.

He thought of his letters of introduction. Then his spirits fell again. If the day were too sacred for the *teskeré* office to be open, the great men of the

empire would be in no mood to receive a troublesome visitor. He must sulk in his tent once more.

There was the American embassy, of course. He had hoped to track himself through the town and out of it without taking his own people into his confidence. But he felt that it would be criminally selfish to wait longer. Every day put Cynthia farther out of his reach.

Instead of visiting the embassy, he decided to try the consulate. Perhaps some trace of him or of her had been found. Perhaps his other self, V. Pierpont, had sauntered in, talked like a new millionaire, and made himself obnoxious enough to be remembered.

When he reached the consulate that, also, was deserted. He was tempted to forswear his allegiance and become another man without a country. But there was a gorgeous *kavass* at the door who explained that the whole staff had gone to see Selamlik.

"And who is Selamlik?"

The *kavass* cast his eyes upward in dismay at such ignorance.

"Selamlik is the visit the padishah—whom Allah preserve—makes to the mosque every Friday to pray. It is the most glorious of ceremonies. Every *Américali* in Stamboul is there who can get the *permette*."

"And I suppose that to-morrow there will be some Jewish ceremony and the consul will go to the synagogue, and the next day you will be closed because he has to go to the Episcopal church. What's the matter with the other days of the week?"

The *kavass* could not understand the American's sarcasm or his impatience. But then Americans were always in a hurry. With splendid condescension he said:

"Thees afternoon comes back one of the officers, Meester Rosen Effendi. He has some work to be did. If you are here again three-four o'clock you find him, I theenk."

To kill time Jebb went on along the Grande Rue de Pera to Janni's restaurant, dawdled through his luncheon, and strolled about through its gardens,

blurring with puffs of impatient smoke the view spread out before him; Bosporus, Marmora, the cornucopia of the Golden Horn, and all the piled-up splendors on their shores.

He tried to remember the unforgettable scene. He knew he had been here—perhaps in this spot. Perhaps he had tossed a gold piece to one of these waiters in place of a copper baksheesh. Why did none of them show his recognition?

If any did remember Jebb, the discretion which is part of a waiter's equipment kept him silent. And no guest nodded to him or asked him about electricity.

Arriving at last before the consulate, Jebb was greeted by the *karass* with the deference of expectancy and with palm open for baksheesh. Mr. Rosen was at his desk, preparing some trade reports, but he consented to see Jebb.

To Jebb's eyes the man was utterly a stranger, but Mr. Rosen no sooner saw Jebb than a smile began to quirk his mouth corners. And his greeting was:

"What's the trouble this time?"

"Why do you say 'this time'?"

"Because it isn't the other time——"

"Oh, you refer to the time I was here before."

"Naturally."

Jebb stood in embarrassment. Everybody could remember him but himself. He wanted to ask flatfootedly what had brought him there before, but chagrin held him, and, besides, he had learned that silence is so odious to most people that wherever two are met if one can only keep quiet a little while the other will begin to talk.

Rosen noted Jebb's confused reticence and set it down to another cause. "You haven't lost your passport again, have you?"

"I'm afraid I have."

"Well, it hasn't been found. If it turned up the police would have forwarded it to us. Say, you must be as rich as you say, for you pay fines just for the fun of it."

While Jebb was trying to think of a remark at the same time elusive and luring, Rosen began to grope:

"Where have you been all this while, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Are you trying to say 'Pierpont'?"

"That's it, Mr. Vanderbilt Pierpont, eh?"

Jebb nodded. "Tell me, Mr. Rosen, did I have a little child with me the time you saw me?"

"A child? No. You had no child with you when I saw you."

"You're sure?"

"Perfectly. I'll not soon forget the first picture I had of you. Word came here that some Yankee was in trouble with the customs house. It's a common occurrence. Americans are forever bouncing into Turkey without the indispensable passport. The consul sent me down as usual to get our fellow countryman out of hock. I can see you sitting there now. You were very haughty. I thought at the time that perhaps you had been indulging a little in magnificent water. You sat there hugging a Gladstone bag and threatening to report the customs inspector to your particular friend, the sultan."

"I had a Gladstone bag with me?"

"Yes, and the fellow had found some suspicious-looking documents in it. Everything looked suspicious in the days of the old sultan. You said you had come to Turkey to buy something—I don't remember just what. So many Americans come here to buy things. Anyway, you didn't have a passport and the inspector wanted to fine you. You said: 'Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute.' I remember that. I calmed you down and persuaded the customs people to accept a consular guaranty and give you a new passport. And then you went your way. Now you've lost it again, eh?"

"You're sure I had a Gladstone bag with me?"

"Perfectly. It was full of blue prints and specifications and other dangerous-looking papers."

"Where had I come from?"

"You got off an Austria-Hungarian Lloyd steamer."

"Where did I get on it?"

"How in—how should I know? Those boats make several ports."

"And you can't tell me where I got on?"

"Look here, my friend, are you stringing me? Asking *me* questions about *you*? What's this new game, anyway? A prize contest for the nearest correct guess? Lord help us, I thought I'd heard about all the fool questions a consul could be asked, but this is a new line. Why don't you cable to your friends in America and say: 'Who am I? Where was I? Where am I? Answer prepaid.'"

It seemed inadvisable for Jebb to keep his secret from his angering countryman. The map of the United States on the wall gave him a feeling that he was safe here, and that it was time to enlist the aid of the republic in the cause of its little ward. Cynthia Thatcher belonged to Uncle Sam and it was his duty to find her.

Seeing that there was no one else about, Jebb hitched his chair close to Mr. Rosen's desk and unbosomed his story.

Strange delight of confession! Just giving voice to his old secret was an immense relief. It was like taking the Old Man of the Sea off his chest. He could breathe with unobstructed lungs. When he had finished a brief autobiography, Rosen shook his head with the sympathy most Americans feel for the clients of Mr. Barleycorn.

"Too bad, old man," he said. "I'm rather fond of the liquid fuel myself, but I take it in sips. I had a friend, though, a judge in Philadelphia, who left his chambers one day for a stroll and woke up in a berth on a steamer just coming into Honolulu. Then I knew a grocer in Philadelphia—an awfully nice man, too—with grown-up children; he used to vanish at odd intervals and turn up in the strangest places. Once he found himself on a farm in Illinois; he had worked there for weeks under another name. I knew a surgeon in New York who sometimes performed operations when he didn't know his own name. He patched up a friend of mine on the street once, and didn't know it. It's an awful affliction, old man—"

"Don't waste time sympathizing with me," Jebb broke in. "Think of the child."

"Do you know we've heard of her from another source?"

Jebb leaped to his feet.

"You have! You mean she's found?"

"No, we've just heard that she was lost. We got a circular note from the American consul in Vienna. He had had word from the Austrian police."

"My friend Von Hellwald put them on the track. Have they heard anything?"

"Oh, no. They've just begun to pretend to look."

"Just begun?"

"It takes a long time for these big empires to budge, especially to hunt for a little unknown waif. Now, if she were an anarchist who had taken a pot shot at an emperor, or a Russian professor who had become a tame anarchist, or a dissipated prince who had gone off on a splurge, they'd turn the world upside down to find him. I'm really surprised at their paying any attention at all to a mere child. But they did. And here's the circular."

He took from a pigeonhole a sheet of paper.

"You see, it says: 'Wanted information of Cecilia Baxter.'"

"It isn't Baxter—it's Thatcher," Jebb insisted. "And not Cecilia, but Cynthia."

Rosen tossed the circular to Jebb.

"It says Baxter here."

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" Jebb groaned. "They've misspelled the name." He looked further. "And got the description wrong! She doesn't look a bit like that! The search has been useless."

Rosen answered cynically:

"I doubt if there's been any search. You know that what is everybody's business is nobody's business. Some overworked clerk has had this thing shoved onto him; he's scratched off the circular and hasn't had time to read the proof—all foreign names look alike to foreigners anyway—and there you are."

Wringing his hands, Jebb sat crushed

once more with the vision of the lost ghost-child roving homeless, unable to tell who she was or whence, and flung aside or driven off perhaps by the very policemen who should have been searching for her.

Suddenly Rosen was startled by a new idea.

"You say the child's real name was not Baxter, but Thatcher."

"Yes, Thatcher."

"Any relation to"—he put his hand out to another pigeonhole for a card—"to John Thatcher, of Berlin?"

"That's her father."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. How did you get his name?"

"It was like this: A few weeks ago a Turk who keeps a little inn in the outskirts of town came in here with a Gladstone bag."

"A Gladstone bag?"

"Yes, same style as the one you carried, now that I come to think of it. But then everybody carries them. The Turk went to America as a wrestler once. He can speak and read English a little. He came here with a Gladstone bag full of papers. He told a long cock-and-bull yarn about some American gentleman who had left them with him and never came back. The Turk came here to see about it. He wouldn't leave the bag, but he let us look through it. There were a lot of blue prints and mechanical drawings with the name of John Thatcher on them. And a bundle of clippings and letters. I made a note of the name and promised to keep it in mind. Where is this John Thatcher?"

"He's dead. I was on my way to America, taking his child to his widow, and the drawings for his invention, and some documents to prove his innocence of an odious charge. And this Turk

has the papers? Thank God for a small mercy, anyway! Where can I find the fellow?"

"I'll send for him. Have him here to-morrow."

"No, I'll go to him."

"All he wants is a liberal baksheesh. But he lives a long way off."

"I don't care. I can't wait to see him. Where is he to be found?"

"His name is Hafiz Mustafa, and he keeps a little inn out near the Adrianople gate close to the Mosque of Mirima."

"Mirima!" The word smote Jebb's ear like a chord of music. Rosen did not hear that music; he went on in prose:

"It's an old mosque built in the sixteenth century, and nearly destroyed in the big earthquake of eighteen ninety four. Odd sort of story. This Mirima was the daughter of Roxalana, the Russian captive who became a slave, then the wife, of the old Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Rather pretty name, isn't it?"

"Isn't it?" Jebb echoed, suffocated with all the word meant to him. "Good-by, I must get out to the inn of Hafiz Mustafa before it grows dark."

"Better go to the foot of the bridge and take one of the Golden Horn steamers; they run every fifteen minutes; get off at Aivan Serai this side of Eyub, and then go west through the Greek quarter. While you're up there you ought to see the wonderful cemetery of Eyub and the old land wall."

"I don't want to see any cemeteries. I want to see that Turkish wrestler with the Gladstone bag. Good afternoon."

And he was hurrying downhill toward the boat landing.

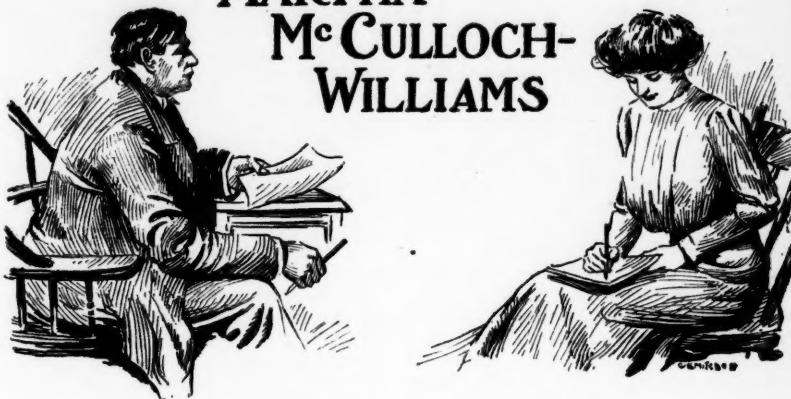
TO BE CONTINUED.



# SALVAGE

By

MARTHA  
McCULLOCH-  
WILLIAMS



ILLUSTRATED BY G. H. MITCHELL

THE special providence which watches over children and fools must also look out for big-hearted bachelors; especially when they reach the years of indiscretion, which, dawning at forty-odd, run on indefinitely. Not the grosser indiscretions, understand, but rather those of the spirit. Up to forty-odd a man worth while is commonly so busy with his work and his world, he is saved from himself. Given the big heart, time mellows it, fills it with a bewildered chivalry toward all things weak, small, or in trouble. If the object of the chivalry is femininely fascinating, even though she may not resort to the tremendous leverage of sex, there is apt to result a very pretty kettle of fish.

All which is preliminary to Marilla—Marilla whom it is not slang to call a peach. Her oval cheeks had a velvety softness of aspect, then the red in them flushed through the fine olive in steady, wholesome bloom. Add that her hair might have been silk spun from

twilight dusks, that her eyes were dark, her voice soft, her whole figure the embodiment of gracious girlhood, that she was alert but restful, and it is easy to understand why, in the office of Gray & Grierson, she was reckoned a pearl quite beyond price.

She was the sort to know and remember everything, and tell nothing. Grierson himself, the surviving partner, admitted he was no match for her in recalling the intricacies of his big cases. She had, you see, really grown up in the office, coming in a slim slip of a thing at fourteen, in the wake of her stepaunt, Miss Teneyk, an efficient and grenadier-like person, who had ruled with a high hand. The deceased Gray had stood particularly in awe of Miss Teneyk—toward Grierson she had shown a relaxed authority, squinting at favoritism. She was indispensable—all three of them understood that. So when she had said, nodding at Marilla: "I fetched her because I'd nowhere to leave her—and she has sense enough

not to be in the way," nobody had objected in the least.

Later there came understanding—Miss Teneyk had method in her madness. For years she had been balancing marriage against Chicago. Chicago had won, but she could not bear to leave her position until it was as good as filled. There was a peroxide widow in the next office, simply languishing to get at Gray & Grierson, eminent as bachelors no less than lawyers. Miss Teneyk had recognized them only as employers and human beings. Even her soul was strictly tailor-made, so it had irked her no little to see, in the elevator, their glances of interest, even of approval, at the widow who wore lace at her throat now and then, and, at least half the time, violets.

Marilla, country bred, was well grounded in spelling, wrote a clear hand, and had a knack of understanding things spoken to her. What with gratitude to her aunt, and natural aptitude, she picked up things so quickly Miss Teneyk went West at the end of two years, her mind wholly at ease. So much at ease she only smiled grimly over the fact that her disappointed suitor had consoled himself with the peroxide widow.

"Hope he'll keep her in violets—that's all the harm I wish 'em," she said to herself, as the train whisked her away. She might have been less philosophic but that there was another man—in wait for her, plus Chicago.

She had never counseled Marilla. "If you're going to be worth your salt in business, you've got to know things without being told," was as near as she had let herself come to admonition.

Marilla had nodded; she knew, oh, so many things, without being told. As, for example, that joyous, simple friendliness kept the men clerks at a respectful if adoring distance, and made the girl typewriters sing her praises. Further, that Mr. Gray took himself very seriously, and made up for it by regarding life as a joke. When he was snuffed out like a candle, she had a sense that the joke had been turned on him, but she did not speculate openly

upon the point—she could not with Grierson so grieved and lonely. He had almost no blood ties, and Gray, his college fellow, had been his only partner. He would never have another; the firm name should stand unchanged until his own retirement made an end of it.

Gray had left Grierson all his live stock, rather a terrifying legacy, since it embraced a main of famous fighting cocks, a setter, gun-shy and short-tempered; a hunter, well bred, but wind-galled, and a grass widow. No irreverence to the lady—Gray himself included her in the lot.

Grierson rose manfully to the occasion, sent the fighting cocks to a farmer friend five hundred miles away, bestowed the setter, duly pensioned, upon a quarrelsome old couple to whom he served as at once object lesson and lightning rod, put the wind-galled hunter in his own paddock, and saw to it that the grass widow's alimony was so regularly paid she had not the least embarrassment in remaining abroad indefinitely.

He had seen her—for just three minutes, but long enough to make him sure he could never like her. He had said as much to Gray, who had chuckled cynically, before answering: "Wait, son, until you see the flash. She's the lighthouse sort, understand—ugly as the devil between whiles, but when the flash comes, look out!"

"I've heard all along lighthouses were pretty dangerous—to wild geese," Grierson had flung back, himself also chuckling.

At that, Gray had laughed his great, bellowing laugh, and there the matter dropped. Mrs. Vane-Streator had never again been named between them, so Grierson's liveliest memory of her was linked with that of his own mild witticism.

Possibly the linking softened a bit the antipathy he had felt, when he had to write to her. Possibly, further, it accounted for the fact that in the course of three years the letters changed from strict business epistles to impersonally friendly ones. The change was mainly between the lines—and Marilla was

much more aware of it than the man who dictated the letters. Yet in spite of it Grierson was none too well pleased to have Mrs. Vane-Streator write that she was coming home, should stop a week in New York on her way to California, and hoped to see him—as a friend rather than a man of business.

"Go? I've got to do it! Poor old Ned Gray wouldn't have batted an eye over it. Remember, I'm standing in his shoes," he grumbled to Marilla, his private secretary, and, to a degree, the keeper of his conscience. "Please see about sending up some flowers to her hotel. Ned was keen on that sort of thing. And—oh, be sure to remind me when she has actually come. I'll go up straightway, and get it off my mind."

Marilla smiled inly; her fine ear detected a certain eagerness in Grierson's voice, but all she said was: "Mr. Gray always sent orchids. I remember seeing the bills for them. How many shall I order?"

"Oh, a basketful—or whatever is right," Grierson answered, with elaborate carelessness.

This time Marilla caught her breath, but in a second her eyes were twinkling as she made a short mental calculation. If Grierson were really so preternaturally innocent as not to realize the cost of orchids in mid-January, she would make the price of his offering at least a liberal education.

Mrs. Vane-Streator came three days later. Immured in her suite at a semi-private hotel, she refused to see anybody for twenty-four hours. Grierson grumbled again; he honestly thought he "wanted to get through with seeing her." Marilla did not grumble, but her heart sank. Once, no more, she had had speech with the sequestered lady—even amid the snarling dissonances of the phone, she had caught the charm of a *trainant* voice, low but dis-

tinct, and liquid in cadence. She pictured to herself the voice's owner as a human orchid, with dust-velvet eyes, lips scarlet as sin, and the poise and pose of a grand duchess. But she said nothing of all this to Grierson, albeit she slept but little the night she knew he was to dine with Mrs. Vane-Streator and take her later to the opera.

Naturally he would be late next morning—therefore, she herself went officewards extra early. Grierson was there ahead of her, not sitting at his desk after his wont, but staring hard out of the window down the ice-flecked expanses of the harbor. He started the least bit at the closing of the door behind her, but turned to greet her cheerily as usual.

"Jove! But you're a trump! A regular little brick!" he said. "Got to rush things like blazes this morning, and you know how we all depend on you."

He was changed subtly all through. Marilla understood; he had fallen before Mrs. Vane-Streator, captive to her



"Come!" the lady repeated, half turning toward the door.

bow and spear. It did not in the least astonish her to have him close his desk after a long, driving morning, saying as he got up:

"I shan't come back after luncheon. You knock off, too—we've put in a day's work this morning, and you look dog tired. Think I'll send you to a matinée—whatever you care for—and you must take along the new girl, the one who wears black."

Marilla's eyes misted. He was deep in love, he had just been deeper in law, delving into intricacies upon which hung momentous issue, yet he took note of her, and wished to give her pleasure—moreover, he held matinées sovereign balm for all manner of feminine woes. But she managed somehow to smile and say:

"I'd rather go home, and darn stockings, so I can go to church Sunday with a clear conscience."

To which Grierson, chuckling, said: "Good girl! She keeps a conscience after eight years in a law office."

Then, with a fatherly pat on her shoulder, he was away.

Next day he showed up as usual, but the inner radiance glowed stronger in his face. Marilla asked no questions—there was hardly a chance. The big cases were rushing and rending, people coming and going, clerks searching, underclerks darting about, juniors and outside associate counsel consulting face to face or calling over the wire. She could hardly recall a time when Grierson's presence had been so imperatively necessary. Possibly she was glad of it, seeing in the rush of things a way of salvation.

Friday dawned bright, almost balmy in spite of the season. But nobody in the office of Gray & Grierson gave more than casual notice to the weather. All were working at high pressure, and so well together results seemed almost to achieve themselves. Marilla forgot everything but the work; Mrs. Vane-Streator was not even in the back of her mind. As the clock struck half-past twelve, she sighed relief, and laid before Grierson a batch of letters for signature, each letter a model.

He had just taken up his pen when there came through the door of the inner office a slight woman, conspicuously inconspicuous as to clothes, with an ivory face, lit by sea-green eyes, and framed in massy waves of pale golden hair. She stopped three feet off the desk, pointing a finger at Grierson, and saying with a smile of soft malice:

"See what happens to the very, very wicked! Kidnapping is a crime I know, here in strait-laced America; but really Anne Norton's house party demands you. Come! The motor is waiting."

Marilla held her breath. Mrs. Vane-Streator was positively ugly. And yet—she looked again. Instead of beauty, there was compelling charm, as faint, as ineffable as the ghost of scent her garments exhaled. Throughout she showed the perfection of detail—a perfection that spoke disregard of expense. As her eyes drooped the least bit Marilla noted the length and softness of the fringing lashes. Grierson, likewise, noticed it. He was standing, saying lamely:

"You—you'll make my excuses—you know I would never have declined—only coming is impossible."

"You have no excuse. You can attend to business next week, when I am away to California. Come!" the lady repeated, half turning as she spoke toward the door.

Grierson shook his head and made to speak; the words would not come. At the door Mrs. Vane-Streator smiled, a slow, dazzling smile, and held out her hand. Only that—but, as though he had waited the gesture of invitation, Grierson rushed toward her, and together they disappeared down the corridor.

The house party lasted well over the week-end. Throughout it, Grierson flittered—a richly-golden moth about the flame of Louise Vane-Streator. It was not a steady flame; over and over he recalled what Gray had said. There were intervals of gray quiet, but they were never long enough to bring him back to sanity. More than once he thought he had himself so well in hand he could leave her—presto! He was



*He saw Marilla looking at him, a world of unspoken pity in her eyes.*

blinded again by a leaping, luring radiance, holding him tensely, whether or no he chose. His charmer was, to speak truth, as uncertain as she seemed; she could not make up her mind whether to take him or let him leave her. She knew well choice rested wholly with her; she had captivated him first for sheer love of conquest, then, her eyes opened to what he really stood for—wealth, honors, luxury—she had so far forgiven him the slight of his old-time disapproval as to consider him seriously.

Still she would not let him speak out. They parted as casual comrades with mutual good wishes. But at the very last Louise flung Grierson a glance that thrilled him, and came back to him again and again as he sat outwardly absorbed in knotty legal tangles. He had

fallen to work with a zest that astonished him, yet there were lapses in which he lived over their few and rare moments of spiritual nearness; for the most part Louise had been high and gay, and friendly distant.

As her man of business he knew her destination; he might, if he chose, write to her, also in the way of business. Yet he had no thought of doing it until Marilla laid a thin envelope before him. His name was writ large and black upon the back; the postmark showed it had been mailed mid-continent. His fingers shook as he opened it. Marilla, who usually opened everything, had left this untouched. Out of the tail of her eye she saw his agitation; also, that the single sheet inside bore but a line.

Grierson read, his heart thumping:

I miss you horribly—write and tell me things.

He got up and walked the room's length twice, then, turning, saw Marilla looking at him, a world of unspoken pity in her eyes. If he saw anything else he would not let himself realize it; or rather he would not name it even to his inmost conscience. He would write of course and tell Louise things—the things she had refused to hear face to face. But he would do it in safe privacy; now he must get back to the world of every day. With the letter ambushed near his heart, he managed somehow to get through an interminable day.

Around eleven o'clock that night he sat mentally tearing his hair, and actually swearing deep oaths at himself as ass, blockhead, and idiot of the first water. Well-born, college bred, gently nurtured, possessing the culture of books and of contact, he yet suffered from a constitutional inability to spell. He had fought it heroically, giving days

and nights to the dictionary, to systems of pneumonics that promised to make him master of the elusive *ie* and *ei*, the doubling or singling of final letters, the traps and pitfalls general of our weird orthography, but all in vain. He could spell no way but the wrong way—by this, judge his dependence on Marilla.

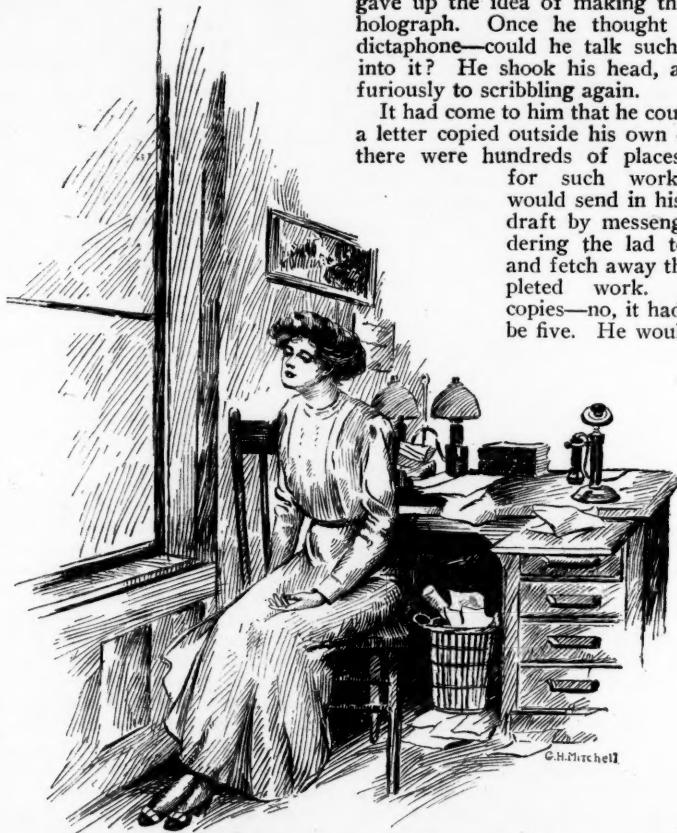
And here was a case in which Marilla's help was out of the question. It was equally out of the question to write down thoughts that breathed and words that burned of love—his love for Louise—all the while consulting the

dictionary. He had tried writing out things free-hand, then copying them correctly. The effort had failed ignominiously; often he could not recognize his own sentiments in his own spelling. Even after he had puzzled them out, they had a sickly, half-alien sound. And he wanted above everything to be frank and open, to confess his infatuation, also his earlier misprision, to say manfully he hated divorce, but not as much as he loved the divorcee.

He must write at once, and in his own hand. But after many trials and much sacrifice of fine stationery, he gave up the idea of making the letter holograph. Once he thought of the dictaphone—could he talk such things into it? He shook his head, and fell furiously to scribbling again.

It had come to him that he could have a letter copied outside his own office—there were hundreds of places eager

for such work. He would send in his rough draft by messenger, ordering the lad to wait, and fetch away the completed work. Three copies—no, it had better be five. He would have



*Marilla sat at the window looking away—out into the farthest distance.*

leeway, and leave to experiment then. With rather tremulous fingers he poured out his heart over several big sheets, pushed them carefully out of sight without looking at them again, and went to bed.

At eleven next morning, Mame, the blonde lightning operator in the Caxton Agency, shifted her gum from right cheek to left and said, with a giggle, to her next neighbor:

"Myrt, if only I'd a-thought to make a nextry copy o' this I'd take it right straight to the police. It's Black Hand stuff—that's what it is. Take that from me, and get next! Feller that wrote it's bound to be some kind of a dago. I've foller'd copy, all right, all right, though some of it come near turnin' me sick. It sounded so crank-sided."

"Humph! You go to too many theayters," Myrtle of the black hair answered a trifle severely, bending to look at a sheet Mame held out. "You let yer 'magination run clean erway with you," she went on—then flung up her hands, and clapped one over her mouth, saying smothered: "Oh, gee! Black Hand! Mame, you're a goose! This is just some business man writin' to his girl—and can't spell. I'll bet money, though, if you worked for him he'd be all the time naggin' if you left out a single one of them little foolish punctured marks, or put in two *pp*'s or double *ll* where there had oughter be one or none."

"You're dead right," Mame said, nodding sagely. "Men in offices is mostly an ignerunt lot. But what can ye expect? They growed up before we had the public schools."

Fate, relenting, put the five copies into Marilla's charge, thuswise. The messenger had orders to deliver them only to the head of the firm. He had been suddenly called away—Marilla took everything meant specially for him. Mechanically she read over the upper sheet, pausing halfway, with a quick, vivid blush, and a sudden in-drawn breath. She dropped the letter, as though it burned her, but almost instantly took it up again, and read on to the bitter 'end. Read less the words,

maimed, mishandled, utterly grotesque, than the soul struggling for utterance through them. As she read her face alternately hardened and softened. At the end it was very soft. She passed her hand over her eyes, then began to work her very best.

Grierson found upon his desk not a copy of his scrawl, rather a translation of it. Marilla sat at the window looking away—out into the farthest distance. She knew where to find everything—his fine private paper, his seal, all the minutiae of state epistles. They sat before him in orderly array; he had only to sign and fold the redeemed letter—he knew she would do all the rest.

"Marilla!" he called, but she did not stir—even though she started as he spoke her name. Commonly he said Miss Moore as did all the rest. "Marilla!" he repeated. "Thank you! How did you ever make sense of this?" waving Mame's carbons at her.

"I—I—think you were—were—unkind—sending—work—out of the office," Marilla said, in a small, defiant voice. "And to that Caxton place of all places! They mess up everything always. I—I—thought you must be—in a great hurry—to send out—anything—so I—I made it right—while you were—away."

"You were kind—more than kind," Grierson said, not looking at her.

Marilla walked up to the desk and stood looking down at him.

"You were more than unkind—not to—to trust me. You know I never gossip," she said, stamping her foot lightly but unmistakably.

Grierson was addressing the letter—somehow his hand shook more than common. He slipped it in his pocket, got up, and said soothingly:

"I know, I know, Marilla—you are truth itself. But you see—I was ashamed to let you know—about my spelling—and the rest of it."

Marilla left him without a further word.

She was brighter, harder, more alert than common, throughout the next ten days. Work drove hard, but she never tired. Grierson, watching her covertly,

was amazed at the reserves of strength and resource she developed. He was almost himself—almost, but not quite. There was a duel of covert glances; thus Marilla was aware that he was not wearing a mask, rather holding himself to an easy poise. Neither the letter nor Mrs. Vane-Streator was named between them. Marilla was sure the letter had been sent. As the time for a reply drew on, she nerved herself afresh.

No letter came—only a telegram to Grierson, saying:

Found Jim—my husband, out here on a wretched orange farm—have married him over—stop alimony—send blessing. Jim and love are way beyond any other husband and money. Frozen fact from

Your friend always,  
LOUISE VANE-STREATOR.

Grierson handed it to Marilla without a word. Marilla read it, her eyes flashing, her hands nervously clenching.

"I hate her! Oh, how I hate her! How could she? After your letter?" she cried, making to tear the unoffending paper.

Grierson took it from her.

"Please take a note to Mrs. Vane-

Streator," he said. "No—not congratulations—there is something of more importance."

Marilla snatched up her notebook and turned away her face. Grierson began reflectively:

"If I send you good wishes, warm and heartfelt, will you favor me with a little advice? My case is this: I'm forty-five and deeply in love—"

"Why! You told her that—and she's married!" Marilla cried, dropping her pencil.

Grierson picked it up, and said gravely:

"Go on, please: Deeply in love—and with a girl young enough for my daughter. Tell me, have I a chance? And how had I best try to take it?"

"I won't write such stuff. You—you are mocking me," Marilla cried, her cheeks aflame, dashing down book and pencil.

Grierson caught her hands and drew them to his breast, saying joyously:

"It doesn't matter. The letter was never sent, Marilla, darling—and you shall tell me what to do instead of Mrs. Vane-Streator."



### Apart

I HAD a thing I wished to show you, dear—  
Sheaves of green arrows, set  
About the marsh, as if some Indian here  
Lingered, and barbed them yet.

I wished to tell you (but your silence chilled  
What I would say to you)  
How flashed an oriole by to-day, and spilled  
Song bubbles as he flew.

Just now I clipped the grass. That hayfield breath  
Brought back an old love scene.  
But you—I cannot make you know, since Death  
Has thrust himself between!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



## On Certain Aspects of Engagements

By Hildegard Lavender

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

### I.

#### HIM AND HER.

**A**LMOST every casual observer of manners and customs has one report to make on the overheard conversations of women. The speakers, being under thirty years, the words "him and her" recur with a telltale frequency, varied at times by "me and him"; over thirty, the substitutes for these are "her seal brown broadcloth" or "it's the last time I'll train a green girl." And then the overhears smile superior, draw a hasty conclusion as to the interests of all women, and pass on.

As a matter of fact, the manner of

the discourse, rather than its subject, is the enlightening and illuminating thing. It's the way that the young woman looks at "him" and herself, the way the older one regards her manservant and her maidservant, and the bargain that is upon the department-store counter that are of real moment. And as the more or less permanent relation of marriage is involved in the fashion in which young women consider themselves and their suitors or "steadies," according to the vocabulary of their sets, that is even more important than the philosophy which their mammas may bring to bear upon the domestic problems of the hour.

The fact which has most forcibly struck one observer and listener is that to-day young ladies of all sorts and conditions are a proud race compared to those of the days of dear Jane Austen and her contemporaries, when a damsels was thankful enough to be the choice of a decent man, and sought to deserve her good fortune by her exemplary behavior after it had befallen her. Nowadays—listen to them:

Mamie, on the way home from the feather factory, to her companion in work and play, Jennie: "An' I says to him, that he needn't. I wasn't goin' to put up with none of his bossin'. If he didn't like how I acted, he could lump it. Humph! He says I won't see him again till I say I'm sorry. Te-he! See myself tellin' him I'm sorry!"

Jennie, sympathetically: "Te-he! I should say so. Oh, well, he'll come around eatin' his words before two days are passed—you'll see."

Mamie: "Don't care whether he does or not! He ain't the only feller in the world; an', anyway, a girl's got somethin' else to do these days besides thinkin' about fellers. Say, Jennie, wouldn't it be fun if we organized a ladies' club an' vowed not to have nothin' to do with them for a year? That would bring them to their senses! Humph! Thinking they can dictate to a girl who she'll dance with an' who she'll not! That would show them, wouldn't it, Jennie?"

Jennie, doubtfully: "Er—maybe. But it's them gives most of the balls an' things."

With which observation, showing that reason has not yet entirely deserted the feminine mind, Jennie and Mamie are swallowed up in the gloom of a tenement hall.

It is obvious to the overhearer what the matter is. Mamie has derived her knowledge of men from novels—novels written since Jane Austen's sane and sober day—and from the same source she has drawn her information as to the proper treatment of the masculine lineman. In novels—the ones that Mamie and Jennie read, for Mr. Bernard

Shaw with his theory of the pursuing female is unknown to them—woman is always difficult, always bewitchingly imperious, always queenly indifferent. Man's position as her wooer is that of the doormat. Her little heel is forever upon his neck, and the more it is there, the more he adores her, until the sudden, blissful moment when he assumes an upright position to clasp her resistlessly in his arms. Then the novel ends, and the inexperienced reader may assume that the remainder of the heroine's life is passed between those two exciting and delicious occupations—trampling upon a man and surrendering to his embrace. From these volumes, Mamie and Jennie, who lack some of the allurements of the volume's heroines, derive their theory of the relation of the sexes during the period of courtship. "She" must be proud, tantalizing, willful. She must quarrel, and she must refuse to be first party to a reconciliation. She must coquet a little, and she must toss her head a great deal if he presumes to take umbrage at her coquettices. She must be incomprehensible, even to herself. And if, in the course of her playing the part of a tournament queen, according to her conception of the rôle, she loses the excellent young mechanician or expressman who hasn't read the novels and doesn't know the game—why, she can take cold comfort afterward in the thought of her inaccessibility or of his inconstancy.

My young friend, Hortense, does not belong to the feather-factory class, but during her courtship by Walter, I have been led to the opinion that she holds many of its theories in regard to the favor which a young woman confers when she permits herself to be loved by a man, and promises him the inestimable privilege of supporting her as long as they both shall live. Hortense has been to college, and she goes to dances which are not the entertainments of "Pleasure Coteries. Ladies and Gents, 50 cents." Moreover, I think that she is in love with Walter, but the novels and other volumes have done their perfect work with her also.

It required some time to bring her to the point of accepting the young man. I do not mean that she asked for a period in which to consider his kind offer, or anything of that sort. I am inclined to think that that sort of thing has gone out along with the other customs of Miss Austen's heroines. But as every young woman of average intelligence knows her suitor's intentions—if he has even the faint foreshadowing of any—several months before he does himself, she has all the needful chance for consideration. And as I said, Hortense spent her period in doubt.

"You're in love with him, aren't you?" I asked her brutally when she sat disconsolately before my fire and wondered if she ought to "let him hang around so much."

Hortense, with a bright blush, said stiffly that they were very good friends. I taunted her by telling her that I had believed her to be of the new order of woman, who did not scruple to speak the truth. Whereupon she said that of course she liked Walter, that he was very congenial to her, very attractive; and then her voice trailed off into silence.

"Well, then, why not let him hang around?" I demanded practically.

"Oh, he'll be wanting to marry me," said Hortense airily. "You know how men are! And I'm not at all sure that I want to marry any one at present."

"She that will not when she may—" I misquoted the old couplet.

"And, anyway, I'm not sure that I want to marry Walter. He's a good fellow and a dear—but have you ever seen him enter an afternoon tea?"

I did not recall that I had ever had that pleasure.

"He's as easy and graceful as a Polar bear would be."

"That's not a very serious matter; he probably won't go to many afternoon teas after he has married you and has some other place to find you."

"But that afternoon tea represents society in general. Walter has no—no grace for it."

"Very few of our men have—our

American men. But they are conceded to be the best husbands in the world."

"He doesn't care for opera."

"You're not very keen on chess."

"He's a dear, of course—but, my dear, he has the vaguest notions about modern art. You should have heard him the other evening at the Lewises', blundering about the Barbizon school to that Miss Moffatt, who is a sharp on the subject. I—well, I was mortified—or I should have been had he been anything really to me."

"If he was pretending to know something that he didn't know or only half knew, I don't blame you for being ashamed. Pretentious ignorance is something to blush for. But—of course he wasn't, you say? Well, then, there was no more to be ashamed of than there was the other evening when I saw you sitting almost silent at the Whites' because the man who took you out to dinner was a famous ornithologist who insisted upon dragging his specialty in by the hair—by the feathers of their heads! No man or woman is going to be a specialist or even smatteringly informed about all the hobbies of all the people whom he or she may meet in the course of a day. I dare say that a little discourse on bridge building would leave Miss Moffatt stranded high and dry, conversationally."

"Oh, well, if you take that tone!" snapped Hortense.

And she went away. A little while later she told me that she could have overlooked all the trifling social lacks in Walter, since they were so fundamentally congenial, if only he didn't make such stupid little jokes—only one degree removed from horseplay, a sort of verbal horseplay.

"Perhaps he doesn't like your epigrams," I suggested.

Hortense stared in surprise at the possibility that any one could suppose that Walter could seriously object to anything in her. But before she could give words to her resentful astonishment, I plunged on.

"My dear Hortense," I began didactically, "you seem to demand everything from the gentleman whom you



*"I wasn't goin' to put up with none of his bossin'. If he didn't like how I acted, he could lump it."*

think of blessing with your hand and heart. Are you, by way of a just and honorable return, giving him everything? You require the social graces, the domestic virtues, the business abilities, of the leaders among men in each of those departments. Are you offering him in return a skillful hostess, an accomplished housekeeper, a well-trained helpmate? You caviled about the way his eyebrows grew the other day. Do you think that you are without blemish in appearance? You dislike, so you say, his simple kind of humor. Has it never occurred to you that there might be those who would find your more subtle wit meaningless? My dear Hortense, since you ask Walter for everything in the world, are you in a position to give him everything in the world?"

Hortense had gone from pink to

angry red and then to pale, during my speech. But she heard me out in deference to my superior years. For a minute after I had finished—it was an address, by the way, that I had wanted to make to more than one young woman of my immediate circle—she was silent for a minute. Then she looked at me roguishly.

"Am I in a position to give him everything in the world?" she repeated. "Well, you cross, old croaker, he thinks that I am!" She ended with a triumphant laugh.

"That only shows how much more spontaneous and generous he is than you," I assured her tartly. "And are you going to give the poor deluded dear what he wants?"

Hortense nodded, and I kissed her. She has made a somewhat better fiancée than I had hoped. She hasn't taken

every expression of a different opinion from hers as a personal insult; she hasn't—so she says, and I think she is to be believed—accused him of diminished affection every time he has had a cold or a headache or a languor that has prevented him from energetic services in her pleasure; she has borne his strange mixing of the names of the modern French artists with Spartan fortitude, reminding herself, she declares, that she would be in a worse plight were bridge builders to be a common social topic. And in the course of an aeon or two, if she continues in the good way she has begun, she may be able to laugh at his jokes or to watch him enter a crowded social assemblage without blushing for him.

"It's you, crosspatch," she tells me, without too much gratitude. "Whenever I am about to play the Haughty Lady Imogen or the young American queen or the goddess on a pedestal or the saint in a niche, I remember what you said: 'My dear Hortense, since you ask Walter for everything in the world, are you in a position to give him everything in the world?' And so I'm becoming quite a model character, thank you!"

It is an excellent motto for the engaged girl, I am sure of that, "though I say it who shouldn't."

## II.

### HIS PEOPLE.

"Thank goodness, all of Fred's people are in Keokuk. I don't have to take Sunday evening tea with them every week, and I shan't have to have them to Thanksgiving dinner!" Thus Mabel, who is contemplating the bestowal of her heart and society and that of her relatives upon Dick at an early date.

"I suppose it's brutal of me to say so, but I can't help being glad that Harry's father and mother died when he was a boy. I do think that getting acquainted with in-laws—close in-laws like that—must be something terrible." Sophia speaks concerning her affianced.

"Tom wants me to make an appointment to go out to Ivydell—did you ever

hear such a name?—to see his mother and father and his Cousin Annie who has always lived with them. Isn't it just my abominable luck to go and fall in love with a man who has a raft of queer relatives living within an hour's travel of New York? They say it's an hour; but then people who live in those odd suburbs always say it's an hour. I told Tom that it was customary for the family of the bridegroom-elect to come and call on that of the bride-elect. And he half laughed, as though those things were of no importance whatever, and said he was afraid his mother wasn't up in etiquette, and that Cousin Annie was too shy to take any initiative. I foresee a course of Sunday dinners at two o'clock in the afternoon; I foresee the very gravy boat out of which I shall refuse a thick brown gravy—ugh! What shall I ever do?" This from Tom's adored Marie, who is by way of being "somebody" socially in New York.

For it is with a sentiment of hostility that woman—lovely, gentle creature!—first views the family of the man to whom she is to be married. You see, that family consists of a collection of persons, individually uninteresting to her, who conceive that they also have some rights in Tom, Dick, and Harry. It consists of an aggregation of persons who knew him well and intimately before she, the Dulcinea of his choice, knew him at all. They have his past in their keeping, and she is a little jealous of it. They are going to be very critical of her at the present, and she has forebodings concerning that. And inevitably, if they have loved him, they are going to claim a share of his future. No wonder that the victim of the most proprietary of all emotions views with an apprehensive eye all the clan to which she is about to belong, but to which she does not at present belong by one trait, one taste, one habit.

As for the man, if he is a good fellow, his case is different. He may think Dulcinea's big brother "something of an ass," and her little brother something of a nuisance. But he is prepared to like her mother and her father, on one of



*Horiense, with a bright blush, said stiffly that they were very good friends.*

the very grounds which causes Dulcinea to dislike the prospect of his parents—they have known and cared for Dulcinea during all those years when he was not present to attend to the job himself, while he was in the kindergarten, the school, the college, the national guards, Wall Street, and all the foolish places where he has been delayed up to this blissful time. He is prepared—if he is a good fellow—to take her mother quite into his heart, to be another son to her in reality, remembering her birthday, when he can, bringing her in the magazine that she likes, teasing her to come with him and Dulcinea on walks and theatre parties and little jaunts.

But it is very different with Dulcinea and her prospective mother-in-law. Dulcinea expects a critic, and in nine cases out of ten she is not disappointed. She goes prepared to be misunderstood, to be resented—and she is. Perhaps it

has made up her mind to be all that is lovely concerning the tribe at Ivydell. Still, Tom might remember that when her family is back in the city, they are always "at home" informally on Sunday afternoons!

"Next Sunday?" says Tom hopefully. He has just brought Marie's mother a copy of the flaring evening paper which her own household laughingly pretends to deny her; he has presented it with the nice, little, familiar jest; he is *dear* with Marie's mother—But Ivydell! And next Sunday!

"Couldn't we put it off until the Sunday after, Tom? The Bishop of London—or of New Zealand or Tasmania—is going to preach at St. Botolph's in the morning, and that would scarcely give us time—"

"Well, then, the Sunday after."

The Sunday after is, of course, gray and bleak with a threat of rain or snow in the air. Marie doesn't want to wear

would be unjust to suggest that even in these enlightened and emancipated days a mother is not sorry to see her daughter about to become a wife, while she may have no such sentiment in favor of the institution of matrimony for a son. And together, with their unspoken jealousies, their self-consciousness, their fear of each other, the bride-elect and the in-laws-elect flounder through some very dark days to the light of mutual understanding. Take Tom and his Marie, for example.

"Sunday's the only day that dad's at home," remarks Tom suggestively. "Couldn't you—"

"Why, of course," declares Marie, who

her brown velvet frock on the dusty trains of the Ontario; she doesn't want to subject her marabou feathers to the inclemencies of the weather. Yet she wants to do Tom ample credit and he has said that the brown—

"Oh, why did I fall in love with a man who has relatives so near New York?" wails Mabel. But she puts on her best clothes and sets forth with Tom.

Arrived at Ivydell, she finds, in a "parlor"—parlors are "out" in Mabel's set—a shy, quiet, constrained elderly woman, with a shy, volatile-to-conceal-her-shyness girl beside her, and a nice, big, shaggy, old man with them.

"Father and mother and Annie, here she is," cries Tom boastfully, as he throws open the door. He and Mabel have walked up the gravel road from the station, eight minutes distant, and two spits of snow have fallen on the velvet and marabou. Mabel feels overdressed. She wonders, with an inward frown, why it is that all suburban houses like this one—put up by the gross for renting or quick selling—should have such hideous mantels, such gimcracky varnished woodwork. She doesn't know how to greet Tom's mother. She doesn't feel like kissing her—she's a stranger, after all!—and a handshake seems rather cold. She is immediately conscious that Cousin Annie has appraised her costume; Tom's mother is also appraising it. They have their sewing done by a suburban seamstress by the day. Tom's mother thinks that she, Mabel, is extravagant. Well, defiantly thinks Mabel, Tom's mother is right—but her father, not Tom, foots the bills—and she supposes that she can be as economical as the next when occasion arises.

They talk a good deal about Tom as he was in every stage of his career from the cradle to the present time. They show her a series of pictures of Tom—Tom with a large "roach" on his infantile forehead, Tom in his first trousered suit, Tom in the high-school class picture, Tom in his first suit of evening clothes. She feels called upon—though

she infinitely prefers Tom as he is now to any of these former Toms—to ask if she may not have copies of some of these photographs. Tom's mother stiffens. She doesn't like to run any risk of losing them, she says; and Mabel says, of course not, and that it doesn't matter. And then Tom's mother says that perhaps, "by right," Mabel ought to have the photographs, and Mabel denies the possibility of any "right" whatever in Tom so hurriedly that Tom's mother thinks her an indifferent sweetheart for her son.

There are one or two old-fashioned jokes at the young people's expense during dinner—the two-o'clock dinner that is all Mabel's forebodings have pictured it; nourishing, well-cooked, savory, decently served, but hearty, oh, so hearty! And any failure of her appetite would be a criticism! And Mabel does not like old-fashioned jokes about engaged people! There is, she tells herself, something very vulgar in the point of view which finds food for mirth in the fact that a man may like to hold a woman's hand, a woman to have her hand held. Yet, looking at Tom's shy, embarrassed little mother and his big, shaggy father, she knows that they are not vulgar.

After the dinner, they all sit around forlornly in the warm parlor again.

"We were such a time getting you out here," says Tom's mother, "that we don't want to lose any of your visit."

So they sit and sit. It is hot. The noonday dinner induces soporific feelings. Conversation flags. Mabel begins to fidget, and to ask Tom not to let them miss the train. Then the family is astonished and offended that the pair are not going to remain for supper—there's a good train in at nine-ten, they say. But Mabel insists that she must be at home; she conjures up a few filial duties which her own mother would probably be surprised to learn about, and declares that she must take the five-seventeen.

"I hope you'll bring your ma out with you some day," remarks Tom's mother serenely.

"We were hoping that we could per-

suade you and Mr. Blank—and Annie—to dine with us very soon," says Mabel, who cannot quite compass the vision of her mother coming to Ivydell before the in-laws have come to Madison Avenue.

But Mrs. Blank shakes her head. She never goes in town evenings—the trains out are so bad. And for her part she finds Ivydell fairly comfortable all the time; quiet, good air, sunshine—what more can habitation offer? "We hope you and Tom are thinking of settling near by?" Mabel shudders, mumbles something, and escapes.

Years later she will have learned how fine and steadfast a woman Tom's mother is, how loyal and devoted a friend Cousin Annie; what shrewdness of perception the older woman has, what quiet play of wit the younger. But that day she goes home sunk in gloom. Tom, who is human after all, accuses her of having been bored and of not liking his people; and she grows furious in denial. They quarrel, and it takes three days of the ensuing week to undo the harm of that first visit.

And almost always it is so. Almost always the girl whom a man is going to marry is at the antipodes, at any rate in the unessentials, from the woman who has reared him. Young men so seldom fall in love with just what they are used to. And that is the reason why shy, timid mothers are always having horsey, slang-talking, prospective daughters-in-law trotted up to them, why religious mothers are always receiving shocks from the frivolous girls their sons have chosen, why old-fashioned mothers are so often harrowed by the introduction into the family circle of girls who want to lecture about woman's rights or to work in an office after they are married or to go on the stage.

And the shock and dismay which the man's mother feels on these occasions are, in gradually lessening degrees, felt by his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts. If any of them had been like Dulcinea, he would probably have grown used to the sort in early life and therefore not have fallen in love with it later. And always the difficulty of any natural, un-

strained intercourse between the opposing camps is as great as between travelers cast upon unknown shores and the natives of those shores.

Among the many new professions opening to the woman of ability and tact, a new one should be included, the introducer—not of rich, unknown Americans to the European aristocracy, not of rich, unknown Westerners to the fringe of New York society, but of young women about to be married to their families-in-law. The introducer should be a woman of judgment and of perceptions, which, with all due respect to the young man recently affianced, he usually is not. She should insist upon a neutral ground for the preliminary encounters, in order that the ladies may have no opportunity to criticize each other's surroundings. She should make separate studies of each party to the introduction, and then she will discover the common intellectual ground upon which they can most happily meet. That, notwithstanding the sentimentalists, is not the son and prospective husband. Each side feels too proprietary, too violent an affection for him, too fiery a claim upon him.

No, it had much better be something else—Japan as a missionary field, and as a shopping place for screens and silk and queer things; clothes, as the lure of the evil one or the means of "self-expression"; or something similar, allowing for different points of view.

But the chief rule which the wise woman would make and insist upon would be that all the early interviews should be conducted without the distraction of His presence.

### III.

#### THE OTHER GIRL.

"An' I tol' him," declares Mamie volubly, as she dodges a car at the Broadway crossing, "I tol' him that she was no good; I tol' him about why she was fired from Zinsky's, an' why us girls don't have no more to do with her, an' how her brother's been in the reform school. I guess she won't be paradin' him no more."



*Tom, who is human after all, accuses her of not liking his people; and she grows furious in denial.*

"I guess she won't," giggled Jennie, the admiring chorus of Mamie's recitals.

"No, sir. If he wants to keep company with me——"

"Well, he surely does that."

"Well, I ain't sayin' he don't. He seems to; an' he declares there never was no truth in that story that he was keepin' company with Maggie, though he don't deny he was kinder stuck on Lizzie for a while. Well, all I've got to say is that he can know exactly what I think about the kind he's been goin' with before."

"Ssh! There she goes now!" whispered Jennie.

"An' why should I 'ssh'?" demanded the belligerent Mamie, raising her voice. Then she laughed affectedly. "I'm not goin' to stop talkin' to a friend because some of the cheapest trash on Orchard Street chooses to go by when they're not wanted. It's funny, Jen-

nie, how some folks never knows when they're wanted, how they're always thinkin they are when they ain't. Why, some one I could name that ain't standin' ten feet from me had the face to think that Mr. Maloney—— Oh, Lizzie, that you? Heard from your brother up-State lately?"

"Do you admire Miss Forsythe, my dear?" It is Marie who speaks, and it is her second or third best friend whom she addresses. She examines a book and rustles the leaves as she asks the question. "I can't say that I do. She seems to me very bad form. Her hats are positively immoral—or worse, they're conspicuous. And her laugh is——"

"It's hearty, but I never particularly objected to that," says Marie's second or third best friend. "And she seemed to me that right through—breezy, unaffected, rather likable."

"Oh!" commented Marie. Then she went on: "I dare say she's well enough—but awfully free in her manner, isn't she? Rather crazy after men? Who was she, anyway? Did any one ever meet her before she came into the Thursday Footlight Club?"

"It always seemed to me that the men were crazier after her than she after them," answered the second or third best friend.

Then she suddenly assumed the look of one who wishes that she might have bitten out her tongue before she uttered those words. For of course she remembered now! Tom used to flutter about the flamboyant girl's shrine. Of course, and yet again of course! What a miserable idiot she had been! And she cheerfully joined in a denunciation of the girl.

"There must have been something in it, after all," she commented to the next person she met. "Marie wouldn't have been so bitter unless she was really jealous. And Tom, of all people—when he seems such a monument of steadfastness!"

"Tell me something," said Hortense, seating herself upon my footstool, burying her chin in her palm and staring at the coals. "Has there always been another girl?"

"Another girl?" I replied, somewhat in the dark. "Another girl—what sort of a girl? Waitress—"

"No! Nonsense! I'm not discussing the servant problem, but the heart history of the human race. Has there always been another girl, another one before you, in the career of the man you're going to marry?"

"Oh, that's it! Of course there has been, unless you catch him in the Froebel mat-weaving, 'my heart is God's little kingdom' stage—and then they wouldn't let you marry him. And even then, I've no doubt, there's been a predecessor in the person of the little girl in the white pinafore whom he adored yesterday. Why, my dear? Since you have brought up the topic—have you been rounding up Walter's past?"

"He hasn't any horrid past," flashed Hortense.

"If I had supposed for an instant that he had, I naturally should not have mentioned it. I was merely trying to be playful."

"Well, then, yes. Did you ever meet a Miss Legret?"

"Tall, willowy girl given to æsthetic clothes?"

"Beanpolish, scrawny, with clothes flung over her as if she were a clothesline," amended Hortense.

"Most people would recognize my description sooner than yours. But yes, I have met her."

"What do you think of her?"

"She's a little affected, but quite an interesting girl, who has traveled a good deal, and seen a good deal, and even thought a good deal. Do you know her?"

"Oh, I've met her around," said Hortense drearily. "But I've got to meet her again—a special thing. Walter wants me to. We're all going to tea together. Pleasant entertainment, don't you think?"

"No reason why it shouldn't be, unless, of course, you're jealous."

"I beg your pardon!" said Hortense haughtily.

"Well, what do you call it?" I demanded.

"I'm uninterested in meeting this person whom I don't care for, as far as I've seen her. As for being jealous, I'm not. I happen to know that Walter has no earthly shadow of interest of that sort in woman, and never had! He doesn't think she's pretty—and you're the first person I have ever heard speak in praise of her understanding. She seems to most people a vain, stilted, pretentious, showy sort, with nothing real to her."

"And yet Walter wants to make a special occasion of your meeting. He calls her a friend, and I think has been one of hers for years."

"He doesn't really admire her—never did. They have to pass the time somehow, I suppose—men before they meet—us—the right ones," grumbled Hortense.

"You're giving Walter a pretty reputation," I remarked.

"What!"

"And paying yourself a high compliment as his choice. He had to marry some one—some time—I suppose!"

Hortense arose.

"Don't go, my dear. I'm perfectly delighted that you gave me this opening," I assured her, pushing her back upon her stool. "I have heard and overheard so many girls, in every walk of life, do just what you are doing now, and I have fairly ached to read them a lecture. But I didn't know them well enough, and here is my opening! Don't you know that a girl never runs down her predecessor in a man's affections without belittling herself, and her relation to the man? It's the very stupidest form that jealousy takes. If another girl has preceded you in his heart—or has hung about the threshold of it—don't, in the name of self-respect, go about declaring that she was an uninteresting, designing creature. Don't proclaim to an amused world that you think your own charms too slight to have attracted a man from a girl of any real charms or character at all. Don't announce that your affianced husband is a man who could tolerate, in any relation in life, even the most casually friendly, a brainless fool of a woman. If there has to be a woman—and there has to be, my dear; either an incipient romance, or an old, true friendship, or an interest—if there has to be a woman, say to yourself, and to Walter, and to the world, in every look and word and glance, that she's charming, a creature of fine parts mentally, of social graces, of genuine good feeling.

"Don't you see what a real compliment you pay yourself if you can assure yourself that the man you are going to marry found you superior to all that, even when he had the opportunity of familiar intercourse with that? Don't you see that you pay him a compliment? And, if neither of these things moves you, don't you see that you save yourself from being a laughingstock among your acquaintances, and that you save

Walter from the suspicion of having come to you only because he couldn't get some one else?

"Half their little world," I pursued, warming to my topic, "believes that Tom was in love with Miss Forsythe before he became engaged to Marie. And why? Simply and solely because Marie has gone about denouncing the other girl—her looks, her clothes, and her manners. If Miss Forsythe were the sort that Marie pictures her, there would be no honor in being Tom's second choice—if it were second choice. But if Miss Forsythe is what she seems to the rest of us—gay, spirited, free, wholesome—then even to be the second choice of a man brought up, so to speak, on such an excellent thing in the way of girls, would be something of a compliment. As a matter of fact, Tom and the Forsythe girl were only friends—I happen to know it. But Marie is persuading half her set that Tom was a jilted suitor; and she's trying to persuade them of a very commonplace girl, too. After which he took her! Oh, the stupidity of you jealous girls!"

Hortense arose with the light of determination on her face.

"Where are you going, my dear?"

"I'm going home to see that my broadcloth is pressed before tea time," said Hortense practically. "If she's going to be charmingly effective as an æsthetic being, why, I'm going to be at least my best as a trim, trig one. Oh, watch me profit by your lecture! She's the best of her kind! She's lovely, alluring, interesting! But he found me more so. It is, my dear mentor, 'up to me' to justify his choice!"

She kissed me and set forth upon her errand. And I felt that I had not lived in vain if I had impressed upon one young woman's mind the great lesson of how to meet the other woman; how to meet her in her fiancé's recollection, how to meet her in the amiable conversation of friends, how to meet her actually, in the flesh. Always with courteous, bountiful acknowledgment of all her attractions, with generous fervor—and with the most whole-hearted best that is in one!

# The SAFETY VALVE



By  
Edward  
Boltwood

THE gay awning of the Calverts' piazza did not quite screen the sun, descending toward the Connecticut hills; and Mundale, after he had finished reading his manuscript to the two girls, moved his wicker chair into the shadow of a pillar.

"Thank you, ever so much," said Miss Blake, shyly enthusiastic. "It is a splendid essay, Mr. Mundale."

Edith Calvert balanced a teacup on her knee and glanced at Miss Blake, with a trace of apprehension.

"Oh, well!" she said. "Munny always spells art with a capital A, and therefore he's bound to claim that it ranks before everything—health, wealth, family, home, and the whole bag of tricks. You needn't believe him, Marguerite."

Young Mr. Mundale frowned, twirling the ribbon of his black-rimmed glasses. He was the musical critic of a New York periodical, and he took himself a trifle seriously.

"But that—that's all very true, Edith, isn't it?" rejoined Miss Blake. "It seems to me very true, indeed. I don't spell art with a capital, but I believe—taking it in a broad meaning—I believe that it is the one thing which can prevent a person from being merely a dried-up machine. I believe that it is the one thing that really counts."

She blushed faintly, afraid that she had said too much.

"Come in and sing for us again, *chérie*," begged Miss Calvert. "I shan't have another chance to hear you until next June. That is, unless you can for once leave this poky Oldbrook, and be introduced to my Washington Square studio."

"I should be home this minute, at any rate," said Marguerite, with an uneasy laugh. "Father will be waiting. My hat's in the hall—please don't bother." And she arose, somewhat hastily, and went indoors.

"Is that charming little girl," inquired Mundale, "condemned to exist—"

"Here in Oldbrook?" supplied Miss Calvert fretfully. "Yes, she is. Marguerite is nineteen, and she has never been allowed to go anywhere. But that isn't nearly the worst of it. She loves pictures, and poetry, and music, and everything—and if you could see her father, and her father's house!"

Mundale looked politely sympathetic.

"Danger of a blow-up?" he hinted.

"Unless she finds a safety valve pretty quick," agreed Miss Calvert. "You heard what she said just now. That set me thinking. When does Madame Nicandra make her American début?"

"The first concert is next Friday, Edith."

"Well, a famous event, like that, will be my best excuse," declared Miss Calvert resolutely. "If I can persuade Marguerite to escape to my studio, even for one night, it may be the beginning of her salvation."

When Marguerite reappeared and listened to the proposal, her brown eyes quivered.

"Nicandra!" she murmured. "Why, I suppose I could be happy for a year, with the memory of a single song! But you realize how impossible it is, Edith. I'll ask father, but—good-by, and thank you."

She accepted Mundale's escort with secret unwillingness, and they walked down the unsightly street. Oldbrook was not an attractive village. The dull, prim houses, with the exception of the Calverts', always vaguely suggested to Marguerite the verses of Doctor Isaac Watts.

Mundale talked, in learned fashion, of the new operas at the Metropolitan. He had asked to be guided to the Oldbrook post office; and Marguerite reflected concernedly upon the fact that her father's shoe store was next beyond it. While Mundale was mailing his letter, an overgrown youth of twenty slouched toward Marguerite along the brick sidewalk.

"Hullo, Daisy!" he drawled.

"How do you do, Aaron?" said she.

"Didn't know's you'd answer to your christened name," said Aaron, "since you and Edie Calvert changed it."

He grinned affably. His freckled face was square and pleasant, but the white teeth were too prominent, and his untrimmed, caroty hair straggled beneath a shabby cap.

"Mr. Blake was waiting for you in the store, up to six o'clock," pursued Aaron. "He said you were going to help him with the labels for those carpet slippers. Oh, I didn't see you had company!" Aaron blinked admiringly at Mundale. "Excuse me," he mumbled, and vanished around the corner.

Standing among bare fruit trees, the Blake house was especially cheerless to Marguerite, that autumn evening. She went through the dark entry to the

dining room, where a student lamp was lighted. In a rocking-chair, which was equipped with iron springs, sat her father, reading a religious weekly. He looked up, with a quick, worried glance.

"I'm sorry I forgot about the labels, father. You see, Edith goes back tomorrow morning, and—"

"Yes, yes, Daisy, I know," he broke in impatiently. "I told Julia to put on supper."

Mr. Blake said a nasal grace, and the elderly servant brought dried beef, and boiled eggs, and a pressed-glass dish of canned pears. Marguerite stared absently across the pink, checkered table-cloth. Her father was a man of a large frame, but he had lost weight recently, and had become thin and stooping. His short, gray beard left his upper lip uncovered.

"Father," said she abruptly, "Edith Calvert has invited me to go to a concert in New York, on Friday."

"What?" he said.

"To a New York concert," reiterated the girl.

"Oh, yes!" His thoughts seemed to struggle back laboriously, from a great distance. "That was real kind of her—I'm glad you have kind friends, Daisy," he muttered; and he fell into a queer silence, holding his spoon upright on the table.

"Well?" insisted Marguerite.

Alonzo Blake hitched up one shoulder with a jerk.

"What? Oh, I guess—I guess Oldbrook will have to satisfy you a while longer, Daisy," he slowly said. "That—that's all there is to it."

"I believe that I never wanted to do anything so much as to go to this concert, father," she flung out. "Never in all my life."

"That's all—there is to it," sighed Blake wearily.

Marguerite had expected no other answer; but, none the less, she was curiously hurt. She felt a hot little determination not to ask him for a favor again, so long as she lived. She did not know him very well, in spite of the

early death of her mother, a country music teacher.

"Why not have a concert of our own?" he said, forcing an awkward smile. "I was sort of thinking you'd sing for me this evening, Daisy, instead of going right off upstairs. Just a couple of songs out of that old green book."

She was sourly amused by his feeble

engravings of "The Voyage of Life," and climbed the creaky stairs. In her bedroom, she changed her gingham frock for a picturesque lounging gown, which Edith had given her, and tried to lose herself in a volume of Maeterlinck. But certain phrases of Mundale's essay hung rebelliously in her mind.

"I must do it some time," groaned Marguerite, clenching her fist, "and why not Friday? Why not on Friday, for good and all?"

She awoke in the morning about nine o'clock, drowsily conscious that she had not slept well. While she was dressing, she suddenly remembered an uncomfortable dream of somebody at her bedside, and that she had sat up and gazed timorously around the empty room by the half light of dawn.

Reflecting contentedly that her father had departed for the store, Marguerite took her place at the breakfast table; and Julia shuffled in with the coffee. The woman rubbed her red forearm on a corner of the frowzy apron.

"Miss Daisy—Marguh-rit, I mean," she faltered. "Your father, he—he left some word—some message—let's see. Miss Marguh-rit, your father, he left word, how you was to send for your Aunt Alice, if you was lonely before he got back."

"Got back?" echoed the girl. "From New York," said Julia. "Your father's gone to New York."

Marguerite scowled in amazement at the sugar bowl.

"But are you sure you have the message right, Julia?" she catechized. "And is that all he said? He must have given some reason for going. When is he coming back? Is that all he said?"

"You was to send for your aunt," recalled Julia, with herculean effort, "if you was lonely, and—oh, yes! He said he hadn't told you about the trip, for fear of getting you stirred up."

*An overgrown youth of twenty slouched toward Marguerite.*

attempt to placate her with such an unprecedented request; and she told him that the piano was not in tune, and that she was tired.

"Well, don't mind, then," he acquiesced. "I was sort of thinking—but don't mind." He pretended to busy his blundering fingers with the lamp wick. "I'll just finish my magazine," said he passively.

Marguerite crossed the parlor, with its horsehair furniture and four steel



"Oh!" Marguerite arched her eyebrows cynically. "He said that, did he?"

"And you was to recollect that he kissed you good-by this mornin', and gave you his love."

Marguerite put on her hat and coat, and walked calmly to the shoe store. It was a modest establishment, where Aaron Watkins was her father's only assistant. She found Aaron checking up the weekly bank deposit; and she made a curt inquiry.

"Why, no!" responded Aaron, wondering. "He never breathed a sign to me about any trip. He'd speak to Cashier Hatch about it, most likely—they're such cronies. I was just going over to the bank."

In a few minutes he returned to her.

"Don't you worry," said he. "But the cashier hadn't heard of it, and I met Doc Crandall, and he hadn't, either."

"You see, it's so—so unusual," apologized Marguerite.

Aaron scratched his head. "Why not call your Aunt Alice?" he suggested.

Marguerite rang up her aunt's number on the rural telephone. Aaron began to whistle with loud and ostentatious carelessness; but the girl saw that he had opened the safe and was inspecting the contents rigorously.

Alonzo Blake's sister, Alice, was a commonplace farmer's commonplace wife, with eight young children. Marguerite detested her. While she waited at the telephone, she formed a mental picture of her aunt, clumping over the rag carpet of her odorous sitting room and wearing the eternal blue shawl, in which she was popularly supposed to spend even the nights.

"I ain't had news of Brother Lonnie for more'n a week," wailed Mrs. Hayden shrilly, over the wire. "What? No, I didn't hear anythin' 'bout his havin' a trip. For the land sakes, where to?"

"Now, don't you get nervous," counseled Aaron again, leaning over the counter. "Everything is shipshape here and at the bank. You can take my

word for that. I'll bet you he's back on the evening train. Don't worry."

Marguerite laughed, for she had no idea of worrying. Her father's flight only mildly perplexed her. But in the evening, when the last train on the branch road from the junction arrived without him, her perplexity was altered to a growing and bitter sense of injury. She perceived that he must have been planning to visit New York himself, at the very moment when he was forbidding her to do so.

Marguerite had spent the day alone. In the absence of Miss Calvert, there was no one in Oldbrook of whom she had ever made a friend. Alonzo Blake's intimates were hopeless vulgarians in her eyes—Cashier Hatch, for instance, who drove his horse in the county-fair races and whose daughter, Claribel, read Dickens aloud at the sewing circle; Doc Crandall, a druggist, who played the accordion; uncouth Aaron Watkins, with his protruding teeth and gawky manners.

By the next morning, which was Thursday, her sense of injury had become sullen anger. All day in solitude she nursed it savagely. During the afternoon she stitched new lace on her evening gown, and composed a telegram to Edith Calvert. It told Edith to expect her to-morrow for as long a visit as the hospitality of the studio could endure. After supper, she went out, pale and defiant, to send the message.

Aaron Watkins motioned to her from across the street. He had a letter in his hand.

"A special delivery from New York just came to the store for you," he said quietly.

Marguerite spelled out the words with difficulty by the light of an oil street lamp.

DEAR MISS BLAKE: Your father gave me your name and address before the operation, but he does not know that I am writing to you. His condition is still very critical. The surgeon thinks that you ought to be told. Please feel sure that he has our best care, and that we never lose heart in this place.

Yours faithfully,

ELLEN MACDONALD,  
Head Nurse, Ward B,  
St. Matthew's Hospital.



*"I must run home—for my purse—my bag," she panted.*

Watkins caught the girl's elbow in his clumsy hand.

"Is the letter about Lon?"

"He's dying—dying in a hospital—alone," she whispered blankly.

Aaron drew in a painful, hissing breath; and Marguerite mechanically folded the nurse's letter and put it in the pocket of her jacket, beside the unsent telegram to Miss Calvert. The town clock struck nine. Watkins pulled back his shoulders, as if to set them at a task.

"Now," he said, "you don't mind waiting for me right here in Crandall's, do you? I won't be gone a minute."

She followed him stupidly into the drug store, where Crandall, with his coarse, mottled face, was at the soda fountain. Aaron spoke to him in an undertone and hurried out. Crandall lumbered toward her, twisting his wiping cloth tight in his pudgy fingers.

"You'd better let me give you a

seat in the back room, Miss Blake," he proposed. "There's most always a gigglin' bunch of mill women in here, 'bout this time, and p'rhaps they'd bother you."

The druggist's back room had an ill repute; but after Doc Crandall had elaborately dusted a chair for Marguerite, she sank into it with dull gratitude. Then he deserted her for a moment, to bustle in again with a china mug of steaming clam broth.

"Maybe you'll relish it," he said.

She heard him murmuring to a customer over the cigar stand.

"Lon?" exclaimed the man. "Lon Blake? You're right, that's tough! Why, his poor girl, she'll be all—"

"Hush!" warned Crandall.

The front door rattled.

"What luck, Aaron?" asked Crandall excitedly.

"Well, they didn't have anything speedy enough at the livery," Watkins

said, "but the cashier is hooking up the old roan for me."

"By gosh!" approved Crandall. "Old Pepper will have her to the junction on time, or leave his heart in the road."

"He's got to," said Aaron grimly. "Her only chance to-night is the ten-thirty-five."

Marguerite stumbled into the shop.

"I must run home—for my purse—my bag," she panted.

"No time," decided Aaron. "And while I was at the cashier's, Claribel Hatch thought to pack up some girl things in her grip for you."

He pointed to a traveling bag on the bench, and a Shaker cloak. The bell of Crandall's money drawer jangled.

"Here," grunted Doc, handing to Aaron a yellow-backed bill.

He avoided Marguerite's thanks by hastening to the door, and she gestured at the telephone.

"Aunt Alice?" she quavered.

"I've told her," replied Aaron, picking up the bag and cloak. "She'd driven in to-night, for grange meeting."

Then Marguerite was dimly aware of being lifted by the cashier into the buggy beside Aaron; of hearing the big roan whinny eagerly, as if to assure her that he knew the business to be done; of seeing the distressed group on the sidewalk—the grave features of men, the anxious eyes of women, and her aunt's set, courageous face.

Old Pepper straightened out at a word, and swung proudly into his famous gait. While Marguerite stared at the tireless spring of his flanks, she strangely remembered how often she had sneered at Claribel Hatch for once sitting up all night in the horse's stall, when he was sick. She huddled back on the cushion, silent and miserable. Aaron drove with absorbing care, leaning a trifle forward and scrutinizing the drab ribbon of road, as it clicked beneath Pepper's hoofs, like the endless film of a kinetoscope. At the steep hill beyond West Oldbrook, he pulled the unwilling horse to a walk, and peered at his watch.

"We ought to make it," he announced.

Marguerite sighed inquiringly.

"The express, I mean," interpreted Watkins. "It's sort of chilly, isn't it? Are you warm?"

"Oh, yes!" She folded the cloak about her throat, and her hand touched a blue shawl. "Why, look! I didn't notice—Aunt Alice—" Her eyes filled.

"I guess she wrapped it 'round you when you weren't looking," said Aaron. "She felt terribly, but she didn't cry, or take on. She's brave that way, Mrs. Hayden is." He glanced at Marguerite furtively. "She's the real Blake brand," he added. "Turn loose, you Pepper horse!"

When they were in sight of the junction, she tried to thank him.

"Shucks!" he objected. "There's no credit in acting neighborly. That's all that keeps folks from being just so many dried-up machines! And anybody in the county would hump himself for—for Lon Blake."

Aaron's staunch voice broke for the first time. He hailed the station agent. O'Brien, rough and surly, came growling along the platform, and allowed Marguerite to dismount unassisted. Watkins, bending over, whispered in the agent's ear.

"B' the powers, that's mortal hard!" grumbled O'Brien. "Gimme that bag, me girl. Mr. Cassidy'll be makin' the run, Aaron. I'll shpake to 'm."

The express whistled, and Marguerite held out her hand. Aaron took it sheepishly.

"You'd better hurry," he advised.

A tall conductor, with a nod of understanding to O'Brien, helped her aboard the car, and placed Claribel's traveling bag on the seat beside her. Marguerite was afraid of her own thoughts, and she opened the satchel idly. Tucked in a corner was a paper-covered copy of "A Christmas Carol." With a wistful little smile, she nestled her chin in the blue shawl; and the swift train burrowed thunderously through the night.

Exactly as Aaron had whispered to the station agent at the junction, so did

Mr. Cassidy, the conductor, whisper to a red-capped porter in the Grand Central, consigning Marguerite to him; and so did the porter whisper to the weather-tanned driver of a taxicab; and so did the driver, when they reached the hospital, give the mysterious word to the night watchman at the door. It seemed to the grateful girl like the passing of a kindly and secret countersign. But on the strong nurse's face of Ellen MacDonald, the countersign was written plain, so that all could read.

In the waiting lobby of the hospital, the veteran nurse patted Marguerite's trembling hand.

"Your father is gaining, my dear," said Miss MacDonald, at once. "No, it wouldn't be safe for you to see him now. Perhaps—in the morning—"

"But I have something to tell him," implored Marguerite.

"You must try to be patient, for his sake. See—it is after midnight, already!"

She summoned a younger nurse, a Miss Hollister; and Marguerite was smuggled upstairs, quite against the rules, and given a divan bed in Ellen MacDonald's parlor. She was awake at dawn, waiting faithfully at the door of the room where her father lay.

The doctor and the attendants, with knowledge of many such vigils, took pains to assure her often that all was well. Marguerite's reply was unvaried.

"I have something to tell him," she repeated piteously.

All day she waited at the door. Miss Hollister, who was off duty, made friends with her, and sat beside her at dusk on the bench in the corridor.

"We understood from Mr. Blake that you are fond of music," said the nurse, in her soft voice. "Music is so restful, don't you think? I have a spare ticket for a famous concert to-night, Miss Marguerite. It is Nicandra's début. Your father is out of danger, and if you'd like to go—"

The other girl shook her head.

"I belong here," she answered gently. "You are very good to me. Won't you call me 'Daisy'?" That's the name I want to be called by."

The room door opened. A smiling doctor beckoned to her. She knelt at the side of the bed, and Lon Blake's arm locked her close.

"I know, father—they have taught me," sobbed Daisy. "I know what counts. I love you, father, and I know! I know!"



### Her Name

O H, my love, in your name there's a cadence enchanting,  
Was ever a word more dear to my soul?  
I repeat it each day, and the soft echoes haunting  
Fill my heart with a sadness I cannot control.  
Like the music of birds, in the springtime a-singing,  
Stole into my thoughts the sweet sound of your name,  
Till each pulse of my heart, with its melody ringing,  
Beat only its love to confess and proclaim.  
See, the breath of the fall is already a-blowing,  
The birds and their music will soon be no more,  
But the seasons be coming, the seasons be going,  
There shall be but one word that my soul shall adore.

EDWARD D. TITTMANN.

# H. LOOK, PURVEYOR OF SPORTS



BY  
**HOLMAN  
F. DAY**

**A** MEEK little man who had hard work to control a nervous Adam's apple appeared before the sheriff of Cuxabexis County one morning and asked for the detail of a deputy sheriff. He gave his name as Delorus Luce and explained that he was president of the county union of Sunday schools.

"Expect a riot?" inquired Cap'n Sproul brusquely.

Mr. Luce blinked at him.

"Gettin' so in this county that a Sunday-school union can't tack ship without a policeman on the quarter-deck?" pursued the cap'n.

"We need some one to keep away the disturbing element that has been bothering us at our annual conventions," explained Mr. Luce. "We have outdoor meetings, you understand, and horse jockeys and peddlers and swindlers and fakers come flocking around, as they always do where people gather. And a great deal of money has been taken away from innocent parties."

"A sucker that gets trimmed always squeals. He don't *have* to play the game," observed Hiram Look, appearing from behind the newspaper he had

been reading. The covert slur on the showman tribe touched him.

"You need some relaxation even for Sunday-school folks," Hiram went on. "Loosen up a little and be liberal—and you haven't got to patronize a shell game to do it."

"We know how to relax," protested Mr. Luce. "We're going to make a field day of this next convention. We shall have choral singing, a cornet solo, and at least one humorous dialogue."

"Can you get by with all that and not have it called too hot a time for Sunday schools to be mixed into?" inquired Hiram.

"It's going a little further than we've been in the habit of going," admitted Mr. Luce, missing the sarcasm in his earnestness, "but you must remember we live in liberal times. The addresses do not seem to take as well as they used to."

"And while the addressers have been addressin', the boys and girls and some of the older know-it-alls have been huntin' up a little quiet fun on the side lines. Mr. Luce, the way to keep folks out of mischief is to furnish something that's more interestin' than the mis-

chief. That's been my job in life—interesin' folks. That's the way I've made my money. I know how to do it. I'd like to show you how to run a Sunday-school convention so that you wouldn't need deputy sheriffs to keep folks rounded up in the main tent."

"That's the only thing in this county you haven't tried to run," remarked Cap'n Sproul, but Hiram was too intent on the subject in hand to attend to that sneer. Mr. Luce had brought up a subject that suggested great possibilities.

He threw down his newspaper and strode up and down the room.

"Of course they'll duck out and get where there's something goin' on if you don't give 'em anything but hot air and a hunk of holiness. Here's two or three hundred young folks comin' together with a picnic dinner under their arms and hankerin' for a hoorah in their haslets, and you expect them to have a hilarious time sittin' on a bench and hearin' Jenny Jones tell why curfew hadn't ought to ring. Say, Luce, you need some ginger put into that Sunday-school convention. Your comin' here and asking for a sheriff to keep off the fakers shows it. There wouldn't be fakers if there wasn't some demand for 'em. And there wouldn't be any demand for fakers if the folks had their minds occupied some way else."

Mr. Luce appeared somewhat impressed, but rather doubtful.

"Get up with the times and inject some ginger!" admonished the old showman. "I can tell you how to go ahead. It's come to me quick as that!" He snapped his finger. "It's in the Bible, or if it ain't it ought to be, that healthy bodies make healthy minds. What you want for that convention is sports. Liven 'em up—wake 'em up! I'll take charge of the whole business."

Mr. Luce turned his weak eyes on the sheriff. It was a glance that appealed for counsel and rescue. He felt that the impetuous Hiram was picking him up and running away with him.

"It seems rather—a—a new—" he stammered.

"You need something new," asserted

Hiram. "You've got into a rut. And that's why the devil has been gettin' busy with your Sunday-school convention. Leave it to me. I'll give you a program that will make a Sunday school the most popular thing in this county."

"What do you think, sheriff?" asked Mr. Luce wistfully.

"I think you'll need a special posse of about fifty deputy sheriffs if you let him run the thing, and I'll agree to furnish 'em," returned Cap'n Sproul briskly.

Hiram blurted a comment that made Mr. Luce gasp.

"I—I think we'll have to limit ourselves to our musical and literary program," said the president anxiously.

"I can attend to that, too," volunteered the showman. "I'm just as strong on music as I am on sports. Now, see here, Uncle Luce, don't you let that old sea hoss, there, get you to guessin'. He's got so jealous of me in this county that his mind's affected. He'll scare you out of a good thing just to work out his grudge. I know him. Don't you pay any attention to him. Now that I'm into this thing, I propose to see it go. That's my style. Once get me into a thing and I'm in it all over."

Mr. Luce's face showed that he was wondering just how Hiram happened to be in that convention to such an extent, but Hiram did not allow him any opportunity to express himself.

"I'll see this thing go through right and proper, now that I've got interested, if it breaks the bank. That's me, Luce! I'll show Sproul here, and I'll prove to this county that a Sunday-school convention can be run right. To have the young folks of this section made happy for one day is enough for me—that and showin' a few old fossils that brains and enterprise count for something. Luce, you listen to me!"

He strode across the office and seized the president by the lapels of his coat.

"This thing has come to me sudden, but sudden things are my strong hold. You drop in here all stewed up because your conventions ain't been runnin'

right. I see the trouble! I take a hand in it! I can fix it. And I'm not the kind that gives advice and then keep my hands stuffed down into my pockets for fear I'll give something else. Here's my proposition, Luce: I'll hire a band—I'm just as strong on music as you are—the literary part I'll turn over to you, for you and me can work together like brothers, and I'll subscribe every

and I'll be enough paid. When I spell public spirit I spell it right out loud. I don't sit back and sneer and try to keep good fun away from the young folks." He whirled on the cap'n and gave him a glance of dignified rebuke.

As alarmed as Mr. Luce was, he did not feel like throwing all this over his shoulder. He had the natural desire of mankind to get something for nothing.



*"I think you'll need a special posse if you let him run the thing," returned Cap'n Sproul briskly.*

cent for the sports, for the prizes and everything, and manage 'em. I'll get back my money's worth in seein' a Sunday-school convention run right for once. I want to see the thing done proper and the young folks happy. All a good, clean show. And if you want to pass a vote of thanks at the wind-up and elect me honorary member of the Sunday schools, why, all well and good,

"I say I'm interested," insisted Hiram. "I warn you, Luce, that if you crowd me out of that convention now I'll show you up in the papers. I'll come out and make that offer over my own name—and a good, nice surface you'll seem to your folks that expect you to work for their interests!"

Mr. Luce made timid inquiry as to what the nature of the sports would be.

"How much do you think a man's mind is capable of all in the space of five minutes?" demanded the old showman. "I've given you the outline, haven't I? You needn't worry about the details. Give me time to think 'em out."

Once more Mr. Luce turned his lamblike gaze on the saturnine sheriff.

"You might get a general idea of what he intends to do by lookin' up the records of that Board of Trade celebration he managed here a year or so ago," remarked the cap'n. "That was a glorious occasion introducin' every skin game known to the American continent and windin' up in a blaze of glory by havin' me lugged off in a balloon. I don't know what he'll do with you. But if he don't start off that Sunday-school convention with four rooster fights and a boxin' match and wind up with a riot in the evening, it'll be a sign he's gettin' old."

"You might as well try to tune a pianner in a boiler factory as talk business here," exploded Hiram indignantly. "Luce, you come along with me!"

He grasped the little man's arm and rushed him out onto the street, and Cap'n Sproul from his window watched until the corner of a distant building hid them. Hiram's big hand was waving before Mr. Luce's nose, and it was plain that the president of the Sunday-school convention was having the case presented to him in vigorous fashion.

"Before that critter's been in Tophet five minutes," muttered the cap'n, "he'll have Davy Jones turnin' an ice-cream freezer and the old hellboss, himself, takin' notes from him on a different way of runnin' the furnace system. That's what comes of a man not havin' any regular business of his own and havin' money enough so that he can afford to make a fool of himself every four days. I can see where this county is goin' to have a Sunday-school convention that will start up the blinders and earlapper business among the saints."

It became evident to Cap'n Sproul, trudging down street a few hours later, that Hiram Look had succeeded in con-

vincing Mr. Luce. Bills were posted announcing the event of the annual Sunday-school convention of Cuxabexis County. The wording showed Hiram's fine touch in use of glowing adjectives, and the bills stated that the sports of the day would be in charge of H. Look.

For the two weeks that preceded the convention the cap'n sought frequent occasion to interview his friend, but Mr. Look was evasive. He appeared to have much business out of town. When he was in town he flocked by himself and was not communicative.

"You run *your* business," he advised the sheriff, "and I'll attend to *mine*. Friendship goes some little ways with me, but it don't stretch far enough to let you under the blanket on this deal. You tried to queer me when I was showin' public spirit and layin' plans to improve Sunday-school conventions in this county. And I ain't li'ble to forget it in a hurry."

"The sayin' is there's room for improvement in everything," retorted the cap'n, "but after they get done with you that convention will wish they'd bolted the improvement room door before they let you in. That's all I can say! I can only stand by now and see the Sunday schools of this county drag mudhook and smash onto the lee shore."

After that Cap'n Sproul kept away from the old showman and took no note of his activities. His attitude was the pose of one who desires to lose sight of impending trouble.

On the night before the convention Mr. Luce came into the sheriff's office wearing a worried expression. But the cap'n interrupted his first words.

"You got your warnin', didn't you? Hurricane signals and all the trimmin's? Now, you needn't think you're goin' to drydock on me. You took him aboard for a pilot. Thrash it out with him—and I don't care how hard it blows."

"I haven't come to complain or anything of the sort," protested Mr. Luce. "But I know you're a man of good judgment and I want to ask your opinion. You understand just how Mr. Look happened to be interested in our

convention, and I felt I could talk to you more freely."

He hurried on, for the cap'n was silent. The little man's beseeching way had mollified him a bit.

"I came down to-day so as to be on the ground early and greet the delegates, and of course I went to Mr. Look and asked him to tell me his plans. He was very short with me, and told me to run the literary end and keep out of his part."

"That sounds just as though he might have said it," admitted the sheriff.

"But I think as president of the convention I have a right to know what's going to be done under our auspices," insisted Mr. Luce.

"You might get a warrant allowin' you to go and search his mind," suggested the cap'n grimly. "But I ain't interferin' in your fight with Hime Look. You said you wanted my opinion on something. Get your business out of you quick. I've got something of more importance to attend to."

"I've been investigating," blurted Mr. Luce. "I've been taking a look around as best I can. I can't find out everything he's planned but I do know that he's got animals down here in a barn, and he's going to have a moose run a race with a horse, and he's roasting an ox outdoors down by the picnic grounds and is going to have some kind of a barbecue and races, and the other things I can't find out about—and now I want to ask your opinion if all those things will really fit in well with a Sunday-school convention? It puts me in a bad position, Mister Sheriff. He won me over. I suppose I'm the responsible party. Do you think a Sunday-school convention will be benefited by any such program, and isn't the plan Mr. Look has framed liable to interfere with the strictly literary side?"

The cap'n gazed for some time into the anxious eyes of Mr. Luce. He delivered his opinion judicially and gravely.

"A bull moose on a rampage might help a pome that was bein' read, and then again it might not. It all depends something on the way audiences look at

such things. And a gang fightin' for hunks of meat off'm a roast critter might not bother a speaker at all—and then again they might. When I was in port down South once they had a bartenders' picnic that I went to, and the barbecue didn't bother the literary exercises any because they didn't have any literary exercises. It may work different at a Sunday-school convention."

"I'm afraid it's going to," confessed Mr. Luce. "And I never was so worried in all my life. I can see that you think the plans of Mr. Look are not suited to our convention at all."

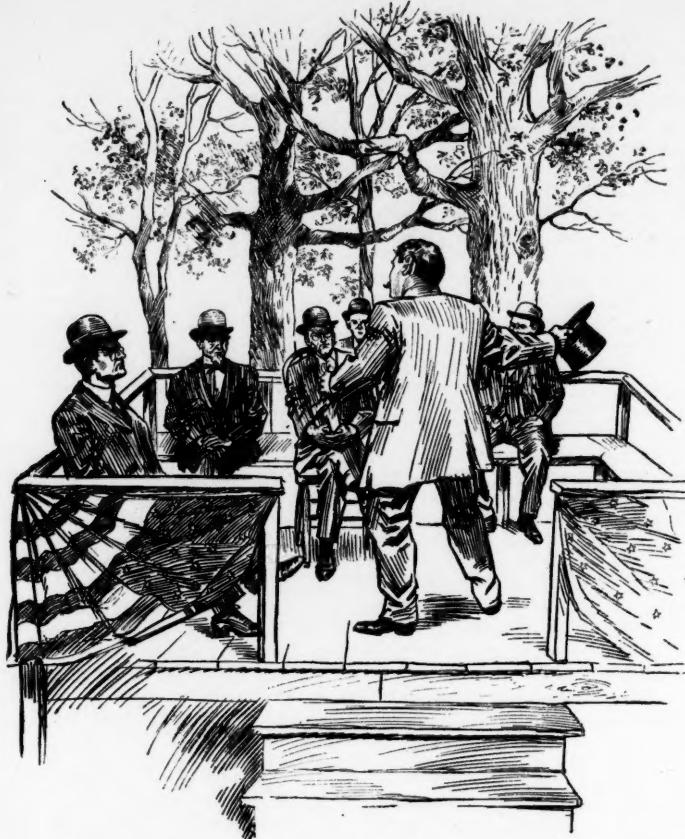
"Them plans that you state ain't worth expressin' an opinion on—they're too mild," said Cap'n Sproul, adding to Mr. Luce's alarm. "They don't sound much like Hime Look when he's really interested in gettin' up a performance. There must be something that you've missed. He ain't goin' to let an occasion like this pass, when he's got free hand, not with no plain barbecue and a moose race. He ain't broke cargo yet on the main hatch. I know him well. You haven't got a sight at anything but the deckload yet."

"But what will he do? Isn't there any common sense in him? Hasn't he stopped to consider that this is a Sunday-school convention, and not a circus show?"

"Probably not," replied the cap'n calmly. "He's got circus on the brain. He's probably forgot by this time that there's a Sunday-school side show hitched on anywhere."

"But what am I going to do?" entreated Mr. Luce. "He told me it was to be just a few innocent sports and games. He won me over that way. He's a masterful man. I couldn't resist him. And he was generous with his money. He even paid for the advertising bills. But he ought to remember that Sunday-school affairs have to be run very quietly. You have frightened me, Sheriff Sproul."

"I'd be if I was in your place," returned the cap'n. "When he gets one of them circus spells on him he'd make his own grandmother dance on a tight



*"Luce and folks," he shouted, "you can see that I know how to run things."*

rope if it was goin' to add to the occasion any. But you've gone into this with your eyes open. You can't gain a lee at this late time—snug canvas, head into it, and let her wallow. I'll have extry deputies on hand in case there's any special riot."

"That's a horrible way to discuss a Sunday-school convention on the eve of its assembling," faltered Mr. Luce, turning pale, "talking of it as though it would turn into anarchy or something else."

"You see, I know him," said the sher-

iff, turning to his writing again and showing Mr. Luce a broad back that hinted that the interview was at an end.

The president of the Cuxabexis Sunday-school union staggered out, white to his lips. The sheriff seemed so calmly convinced that the next day would bring disaster that Mr. Luce was more affrighted than he would have been by violent predictions.

He crawled into bed at the village tavern, hoping against hope. He had tried once more to see and appeal to

Hiram Look, but that seemed to be Hiram's busy evening.

Mr. Luce, as well as other citizens of the county seat, was awakened early next morning. Squeal of fifes and clatter of drums stirred all who dozed as late as six a. m. on that festal day. The Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association of Scotaze had arrived on call of its foreman, Hiram Look, and was marching from the railroad station to the town square. A banner fifty feet long, supported at intervals by staffs, swayed above the heads of the line of march and was inscribed: "Sunday-School Convention of Cuxabexis." The Ancients were singing their familiar rallying call, and Mr. Luce nearly fainted when they roared at the end of the chorus: "We'll lick hell for a half a dollar!" Under that banner the words were loyal, of course, but did not seem entirely in harmony with the occasion.

The president of the convention dressed himself like a man summoned by a fire alarm and hurried to the square. Foreman Look had joined his men and was giving them some particular and forceful instructions regarding the program of the day. He had scant time for a man who came to him, as did Mr. Luce, stammering objections.

"Say, look-a-here, Luce," he snapped, "when there's anything on in this country of a public nature and the Scotaze Ancients ain't called in to lend tone, then it won't be me that's managin' the thing. They're here because they belong here. Now, you go along and look after your literary program. Don't be neglectin' that to daub into my part of the job."

He pushed the convention president out of the way and went among his men continuing his instructions.

Mr. Luce circled the crowd trying pathetically to explain to this or that one that he thought the Ancients really did not belong in the plans of the convention. He pleaded that they furl that banner. No one paid any attention to him. There was only one man in authority that day, so far as their knowledge went, and that man was Hiram

Look. Hiram Look was talking, and they turned their backs on the president of the convention.

"I've backed you to win, gents," concluded their foreman. "Go in and win even if you have to rip them Vienny mopebuckets into cat-meat strips. You've got the grit and you've got the muscle, and there's a barbecue waitin' for you after the wind-up."

The cheers deafened Mr. Luce, and then the Ancients began to sing their song. He did not wait for that last line of the chorus. His heart was too sick. He hurried away toward the picnic grounds. He did not want to go back to the tavern. His appetite for breakfast was gone. Hiram Look had talked as though he were arranging for civil war.

He found the barbecue in process of preparation. A pit had been dug at one side of the outdoor speakers' rostrum, and over the glowing coals that filled the depression a steer was hung on an iron pipe—a blackened, frizzled, malodorous object that was far from appetizing. Three red-faced men were superintending, and one of them shocked Mr. Luce by offering him a drink from a black bottle. It was plain that the three men had whiled away a night's vigil by frequent reference to that bottle.

Mr. Luce had no voice left for further protest. He hurried away from the insistent men.

At a little distance he came upon another spectacle that halted him. A mottled, slab-sided, gaunt racer of a pig was hitched to a tree by a rope attached to his hind leg. A man was anointing the animal with a swab that he dipped into a bucket of melted grease. The pig was registering protest by ear-splitting squeals.

"This is co't number one, boss," the man informed Mr. Luce. "It will take about two more to put him into the real greased-lightnin' class. Says I to Mister Look: 'Leave it to me if you want slipp'ry Cephas put into the eel division. I'll have him in shape to slide through that Sunday-school convention like soft soap slidin' off'm a barn shov-

el.' I've been feedin' that shoat on sweet oil and slipp'ry ellum bark for two weeks. Now, after I get three co'ts of 'intment onto him—last one five minutes before the race starts—it'll take more'n the prim'ry class in a Sunday school to hold him. Back that up with your last dollar!"

"What does this mean, anyway?" Mr. Luce was emphatic.

"Which side are you on, Scotaze Ancients or Vienny Blues?" inquired the man suspiciously.

"I'm on neither side, sir. I'm the president of the Sunday-school union of this county."

The man became gracious at once.

"Oh, one of the officials! Well, president, seems as though you ought to know that there's goin' to be a greasy pig race between them two fire companies to settle the old grudge. I hain't bothered much about the rest of the exercises, but I'm tellin' you right here and now, you watch that pig race. It's goin' to be the best thing of the day's programmy. Personally I'd like to have the Scotaze fellers win out—seein' that Mister Look is their foreman and is puttin' up the stuff. But you needn't worry none but what Vienny will be there with the goods. If you've got money to put up either way don't let 'em trim you on odds."

Mr. Luce retired. He went hastily. He sped back to the village square. His meek face was white with anger. He muttered words to himself that did not accord with the spirit of convention day.

He met Hiram Look coming toward the convention grounds. The old showman had his silk hat on the back of his head, and a gorgeous badge that announced him as "Director of Sports" flamed on his breast.

"I haven't got any time to stand here and gab with you," he snapped, checking Mr. Luce at the first of his outburst. "I've got my end of this thing to 'tend to. You ought to be 'tendin' to your end. Come along if you want to talk." He yanked the little man around and urged him to a quick pace. "I've got a thousand things to think about

and I can't have you around underfoot all the time. Now get it off'm your mind and go off about your lit'r ary business."

"It's a perfectly damnable outrage, this whole thing that you are jamming onto our peaceful and respectable convention," blustered Mr. Luce. "That's strong language, but I find that no other kind of talk has any impression on you."

"And even that don't, either," replied Hiram, keeping up his brisk pace. "I'm runnin' these sports right accordin' to our mutual agreement—broad, open, and liberal. You've got a crowd that's hungry for amusement, and I'm goin' to give 'em what they want. I know how to do it. I'm payin' the bills. And if you think that folks want to be entertained by a croquet match and a game of 'Who's Got the Button,' then you show you ain't the right man for your job. I'm doin' all I agreed to do, and more, too. I'm goin' to make a convention out of this that will be talked about."

"No one will ever forget it," gasped Mr. Luce, trotting to keep up.

"And there won't be a gamblin' game or a faker or a snide trick on the grounds," asserted Hiram proudly. "Just clean sport, and the best men take the purses. Now, Luce, you hain't got no kick comin'. I'm in full charge of this end. I'm carryin' it all out on a liberal basis. Now, you come around botherin' me any more and I'll run against you for your office and beat you out. I'll be popular enough to do it by the time this thing winds up to-day."

He pushed the distracted president to one side and went off toward the picnic grounds. And after that Hiram Look was the centre of such whirlpools of activity that Mr. Luce was unable to get within speaking distance.

Likewise, he was not able to accomplish much of anything else. The delegates arrived by train, in teams, on foot, and Mr. Luce found that it was impossible to round up his scattered cohorts in order to explain the situation from his standpoint. He had had the desperate idea of assembling them and



*Never on any football field was there rush like unto that.*

urging them to desert Newry for the day and hold their convention elsewhere. But Hiram's band was at the station to meet the trains. Hiram's band was in the town square to stir enthusiasm. The band dragged the crowds here and there.

Mr. Luce gave up chasing and exhorting. He retired to the rostrum under the trees, along with a few elderly people who could not march to band music, and there he sulked or exploded as resentment or passion prompted.

It must be confessed that the only ones who remained to listen were those who were too feeble to tramp about in the wake of the ubiquitous Hiram. That tireless purveyor of sports had the eyes and the ears of the populace. There was an early parade of the rival fire companies of Scotaze and Vienna. There was a race on the highway between a bull moose hitched to a jumper and a strange-looking horse that the owner called "Mustache Maud," on account of a very striking pair of mustaches that the equine had on her upper lip, lengthy and cocked kaiser fashion.

The race was hardly a success as a pure contest, but it was effective from a spectacular standpoint.

Nervous horses hitched to the roadside fence saw that strange creature with the Hubbard-squash nose advancing, and reared and kicked and ran away. Even Mustache Maud took a horrified look and disappeared in a cloud of dust.

But disaster in one event did not embarrass Hiram.

"At any rate we're keepin' the crowds interested, and that's what we're here for," he assured his subcommittee. "Fetch on them sack races and three-legged races. We've got a whole day full of stuff. Hump 'em along!"

Events followed each other so rapidly that the throngs seemed to have forgotten the exact significance of the gathering. Mr. Luce and the elderly persons kept their seats on the rostrum, but the benches under the trees were deserted. The Sunday schools of Cuxabexis were lined along the highway cheering contestants to victory. The drums beat and the bands played.

But Hiram Look was a fair man. He told himself so as he hurried toward the rostrum near the close of the forenoon. It had occurred to him that Mr. Luce should have his innings.

The old showman came rushing upon the platform among the elderly folks, like a strong wind stirring withered leaves. His hat was in his hand. He was mopping his brow. There was the light of triumph in his eyes.

"Luce and folks," he shouted, "you can see that I know how to run things. Hear them howls? They're all havin' the times of their lives. I could keep 'em goin' like that till sunset. But I ain't any hand to hog things. It's up to you to have your lit'rary end to this convention, and you're goin' to have it even if I have to drag them delegates here by the scruff of the neck. But I've got to change the program a little mite from what I planned."

He sat down, threw one leg over the other, and addressed his glowering auditors confidentially.

"I was intendin' to throw in the barbecue right about this time and then you could spin off the lit'rary part while the folks dozed a little on full stomachs. But the boys is all hot and rarin' to have the pig race before the barbecue. I know you're all good sports and you don't want to see my crowd downed. But confidentially, between you and me and to go no further, because they're good boys, them Scotaze Ancients after they've et ain't no more good than a boy-constructor snake is after he's swallered a giraffe. They're certainly enthusiastic eaters. Just now I'm havin' hard work to hold 'em in from that pig race. They figger it'll give 'em a real razor edge on their appetites. So the idea is"—he held up his hand and ticked off his fingers—"pig race, barbecue, band music, and lit'rary program. If that suits you then that suits me."

He beamed on them.

"Let me tell you, sir," shrilled Mr. Luce, wagging his finger, "that we positively refuse to have any truck or dealings with you in any shape or manner. I've told you so before. Now that

you've lighted where I can have a word with you, I repeat it. You are disgracing this convention. I see that some of the delegates are coming to their senses." He pointed to the settees where weary celebrators were assembling. "We shall go on about our business—the business we're met for. And if our meetings are disturbed by your nonsense and cheap riots I'll call upon the sheriff of this county to arrest you and your gang."

"And I'll tell you," roared the indignant showman, "that these sports that I'm managin' are a part of this Sunday-school convention, arranged for by you through me and fully authorized, and if you don't show no more spirit of compromise when I come to you as polite as I know how I'll keep on runnin' my end to suit me, and be damned to you and your lit'rary program."

Mr. Luce jumped to his feet and pounded on the desk.

"The convention will come to order," he cried. "Now, sir, you be careful how you disturb a religious gathering," he commanded Hiram.

"All hands on deck for that pig race!" bellowed the manager of sports. "We'll see which end of this convention draws the crowd! I'll prove whether I'm right or you be!"

There was a little plot of field back of the settees. Hiram marshaled the parade that advanced that way. He went first, the custodian of the squealing shoat came next, walloping on his captive with blows from the slush mop, and behind flocked the Ancients and the Blues, shouldering each other, muttering defiance and boasts, and keying up their courage and their spite.

"I'll bet you one hundred to seventy-five that the Ancients get the pig," yelled Hiram, catching a boast of the opposing faction. "And if it's plain scrap you're lookin' for I'll bet five hundred to one hundred that my boys can lick the field. That's the kind of a crowd that I'm foreman of!"

"You bet you are!" came a chorus from his band.

One man tore off his scoop hat and

proposed three cheers for Foreman Look.

Then they roared their war song:

"Rip-te-whoop, and all hands holler,  
We'll lick hell for a half a dollar."

The Vienna Blues came back just as vigorously. Mr. Luce held his hands over his ears, and the elderly persons on the platform displayed proper symptoms of shocked amazement.

The president's appeals to come away from that haunt of crime and vice were not heeded by the mob. It was very plain that something was going to happen that would be entirely fresh in the annals of Sunday-school conventions in Cuxabexis. Men, women, girls, and boys thronged about the field of combat, stood on settees, crowding forward with eyes bulging and mouths open. Only a few moments were required for the opposing hosts to array themselves. They hurried like men who were eager for conflict. They were shouting threats and boasts back and forth across the field. The Blues took one side, the Ancients were massed on the other, and the shoat and his keeper were between.

"When I shoot off this pistol," yelled Hiram hoarsely, "cut that rope close to his leg and swat him with that mop. The man that starts before that shot will get winged by the other barrel of this pistol. This is a fair field and no favorites. Ready!"

The custodian was kneeling beside the dripping pig, his knife open.

The pistol cracked.

Never on any football field was there rush like unto that. The two sides fairly catapulted toward each other, their hands outstretched, their eyes on the shoat. That perturbed animal was plainly in a state of mind! He dodged, he ducked, he ran to right and left, slipped on the turf, fell down, rose, and ran again. The bulk of the men rushed at each other. The game was to be a tackle. Two men from each side ran at the pig, having been delegated for the capture while their comrades played offensive and defensive.

In one part of the field men were rolling and battling, clinching and

thrusting. The four men came together over the terrified pig. Shoat and humans, they fell in a huddle. Then the four men arose with hands dripping grease and made at each other. In that mix-up each had received a blow that diverted attention from mere pig catching. There were grudges new and grudges old to settle.

The shoat fled. He leaped over combatants who were struggling on the ground. The side lines of spectators attracted him. The spectators had not anticipated such a catastrophe. That one plain and humble pig could escape from forty men in so small an arena had not occurred to those who looked on. But they had not calculated that interest in something else than pig pursuing would be developed so promptly.

By this time even Hiram Look had forgotten pigs. He was standing at one side urging his men to eat up the Vienna "sons of a cotton-toed Americaneezus." Opposite him was the foreman of the Blues equally anxious, so he expressed himself, that his men should "rip them wall-eyed hyenas of Jericho into so small pieces that Scotaze wouldn't know 'em when they got home."

Sheriff Sprotl was spending that August noon under one of the maples of the courthouse lawn, trying to comfort his soul with the coolness of the shade. The village seemed pretty well deserted. He knew that the populace had flocked on the trail of Hiram Look. The occasional cheers and shouts from the picnic grounds did not disturb him. Even when the diapason of a fierce uproar saluted his ears he kept calm. So far as Mr. Luce and Hiram Look were concerned he was not playing favorites. He nursed the tender hope that both were getting all that was coming to them.

Suddenly an apparition came into view down the highway. It was a gaunt, mottled racer of a pig running wildly. The animal sped past the courthouse and disappeared up the street in a cloud of dust.

"Sunday-school convention must be

breaking up," confided the cap'n lazily to himself.

Five minutes later Mr. Luce appeared to him.

"Sheriff," he shouted, clutching at his throat to control his breath, "they're killing each other. They've busted up our convention, they've disgraced the Sunday schools, and now they're killing each other. They're rolling on the ground and eating each other up. Go down there—go down there quick!"

"What for?" inquired the cap'n ingenuously.

"To stop 'em from killing each other!"

"I don't ever interfere in any self-actin' proposition of that sort," stated the sheriff. "Every funeral that happens on account of that mess will be a public benefit, and I'm too public-spirited to prevent this county from gettin' all the good it can out of this thing! Got any other business with me?"

"What are you elected for?" demanded Mr. Luce.

"I ain't elected to go around disturbin' religious gatherin's such as you and your friend Look are managin' to-day," retorted the sheriff. "What's the next thing on the programmy—a pome or a bear fight?"

Mr. Luce was plainly preparing indignant reply when another man appeared on the scene.

"Sheriff," he panted, "Foreman Look sent me up to ask you to send down a posse. Them Vienny Blues have assaulted, malice aforethought, his Ancients and done 'em up, and he wants protection."

"Can you run back as fast as you run up?" inquired Cap'n Sproul.

"I'll try to," replied the man gallantly and eagerly.

"Then you run and tell Hime Look that I'm glad of it, and if he ain't dead sure he's been licked I'll come down myself and finish the job."

But now still another courier arrived. He was one of the Ancients.

"You needn't send that posse, sheriff," he yelled. "We turned to and done 'em up. They thought they had us licked and was goin' to steal that

barbecued steer and have it all for themselves, and we got together again and cleaned 'em out, root, branch, stock, and barrel, and old Scotaze is on top and is eatin' that steer! That's the kind of fellers we be! And the chief wants you to come down and join in."

He mopped at a cut over his eye and gazed expectantly at the sheriff.

"I've been gettin' various and regular reports from that Sunday-school convention," said the cap'n, "and I ain't been believin' more'n half what I've heard. But I know *you're* tellin' the truth! That's exactly what would happen if any one tried to steal something to eat away from the Scotaze Ancient and Hon'erble Firemen's Association. Threaten their grub and they'd lick Goliah and the Tophet Artillery Corps, Number One. You're tellin' the truth."

"What will I tell Foreman Look from you?" asked the gratified messenger, too excited to grasp the full satire.

"You tell him—" began the cap'n. He hesitated and looked at Mr. Luce.

"This being a Sunday-school-convention day, the language I had in mind to send him wouldn't fit in well with the regular programmy."

He turned his back on them and trudged up the jail steps.

"Well, no matter about him," said the indignant courier. "He was our foreman once, and was always growlin' because we liked a little feed now and then. You better come along down, president. The tussle is all over, and the inside cuts off'm that steer are something rich. You might as well grab in with the rest."

And after Mr. Luce had stood for a little while and meditated, looking first at the jail door that the sheriff had closed behind him, and then in the direction of the picnic grounds, he rubbed his hand over his hollow stomach, sighed, groaned, and decided that he would join his flock at the feast, hateful though it was. But on his way back to the grounds he tore down every handbill that advertised the "Annual Convention of the Sunday Schools of Cuxabexis County, H. Look, Manager of Sports."

## GOOD ADVERTISING

By Charles Battell Loomis

THE other day a good many of my readers may have read a talk by an advertising solicitor of standing, in which he said that the little show of bad temper between two sects in Rome on the occasion of Colonel Roosevelt's visit there was bad advertising; that quarrels among church people, no matter of what denomination, are not conducive to the further spreading of the gospel of peace.

It struck me that this was eminently sane, and while Mr. Solicitor was ultimately "out for the ducats," one felt that he was quite sincere in what he said.

This business of advertising enters into our lives to a greater extent than some of us think.

Parents like to be well advertised by their children; that is to say, they want their home methods, which are invariably good methods—yes?—to bear fruit that shall show the kind of parents they are. But if children on street cars, going to and from school, act like hoodlums, they are making a display ad that represents their parents as lacking in all the finer courtesies. If a boy is a hoodlum, his father can't be a gentleman. Right or wrong, that's the way a great many persons look at it.

On the other hand, if a little girl is well mannered, or a boy of twelve acts as if he thought there were other people in the world beside himself, there is a pictorial advertisement of good management and refining influences at home.

There is no act that we can do that is not in a way an advertisement of something.

Municipalities are often heavy advertisers, and insert just the wrong advertisements, day after day.

There may be a town that wishes to boom itself. Its inhabitants feel that it is situated in a good place for business, and they want to attract capital to it; they want to build up its population.

But day after day they allow an advertisement to remain in sight; an advertisement that turns the balance against them.

I refer to the ramshackle buildings around the railroad

station. It is a truism that first impressions are often final impressions, and when a man alights from a train and sees two or three cheap groggeries, an abandoned blacksmith shop with the window panes broken, the roof going into a swift decline, and one or two depot hacks that look as if a one-hundred-and-fifty-pound fare would wreck them, he is apt to gather from the advertisement that the town is a poor place; and if he is house hunting he may go on to the next place without further investigation. Attractive portals are worth all kinds of money to a municipality.

I know a real-estate concern that wishes to attract people of the better class to a little town that is on the boom. How do they advertise? By decorating, or perhaps I should say desecrating, an entire house with sprawling letters spelling the announcement that they are prepared to sell "restricted property."

The big letters certainly attract attention, but to a man looking for a pleasant home, the neighborhood looks cheap by virtue of the big belettered house. Bad advertising.

A friend of mine bought a half dozen peach trees to set out in his hen yard. The man who sold them to him was anxious to obtain and keep his custom, and my friend would rather buy of him than hunt up some one else. So far they were playing into each other's hands.

But when it came time for those peach trees to show signs of life five of them shook their branches as much as to say: "Nothing doing." The sixth one, remembering that the reputation of the firm was at stake, put forth leaves and inched up into the air in an ambitious way.

Of course, my friend wrote to the nurseryman that five of the trees were out of the race, and that he'd like to have him enter as many more for another trial.

They came along in due time, and were introduced to Mother Earth. Winter came and went, and then spring, with her blandishments, came along and held out inducements to those peach trees to enter into a competition, each with the other.

The original peach tree responded bravely. He not only leaved out, but he put forth a score of pink buds, with no thought of frosts in his head. But the five substitutes were dead ones.

Do you think that when my friend receives the printed advertisement of those nurserymen it will have much effect on him?

Their biggest advertisement would have been six flourishing peach trees. But out there in my friend's hen yard

were five advertisements to the effect that those nursery-men were in the business of providing dead wood at so much a stick.

You go into a store that advertises to the extent of pages in the daily papers. In some cases the advertising manager feels that his efforts must all be put forth in the daily prints; that effective wording and good display and incessant iteration, varied sometimes by noteworthy cessation from any advertising at all—on the principle that when the clock stops in church you wake up—are all that is necessary.

Now, a really wide-awake advertising man will see to two things; first, that the goods in the store are all they are represented to be—that's merely common sense, because you don't go on buying dead peach trees unless you are a fool—second, that the clerks in the store are attentive and courteous.

Every flippant, careless, inattentive clerk should be charged up to bad advertising. Every interested clerk is worth more than a whole page of advertising in certain sheets that I could name, but have not the slightest intention of so doing.

Governor Hughes is the best advertisement that the State of New York has had in ten years. The late Governor Johnson, of Minnesota, was such an advertisement as the Democratic party could ill afford to lose.

To paraphrase Shakespeare once more: All the world's a page, and all the men and women advertisers.

Let us see to it that what we advertise is something that we wish to advertise. Many a man advertises something without a thought that he is advertising at all.

A shrewish voice at a front window, calling morning after morning, in vixenish tones, to a vexing child on the sidewalk, is a standing advertisement to the neighbors that if the boy is looking for tenderness he was born into the wrong environment.

A crackling laugh, apropos of nothing, announces the fact that here is an empty head if anybody wishes one.

A winning smile, that comes at a look, advertises a pleasant disposition.

A high-pitched, nasal voice advertises the fact that—perhaps—in spite of the care of father and mother, the girl would not cultivate her lower tones, and so she is an advertisement, also, of "that hideous Yankee voice."

Advertise your best wares and don't allow any unworthy ads to creep in. That is good advertising.



# MRS. BIRDSALL'S PROXY

by Grace  
Ethelwyn  
Cody

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

KATHARINE BIRDSALL stepped out on the veranda and sat down by her grandfather, taking one of his hands in hers. She had been doing this at intervals all the morning, but to the gentle old man in the rustic chair there was nothing unusual in such petting. It roused no question in his thoughts.

He turned to her with a whimsical smile. "All the birds have stopped singing, my dear," he said, "several years ago. It's a pity. The robins in our yard used to sing very sweetly."

"I'm so sorry!" she answered, leaning close and speaking distinctly.

"Oh, no—don't be sorry," he protested, as he got up slowly and straightened his back. "I can hear a good deal yet, even if the birds don't sing. I think I'll go and inspect that pansy bed, Katie. Looks to me as if it had been trampled on overnight."

There was a special tenderness in Katharine's face as she watched him cross the lawn. Her grandfather's old age seemed beautiful to her, because, in spite of infirmities, he found comfort in it. It was his resting time, after life's day of work, and the reason for the look in her eyes now was a thought that something might be coming which

would destroy its peace. Then she drew a long breath and shook off the fear. Why not expect good news, instead?

"Good morning, Katharine? How's your mother?" some one called. It was Gretta Guyles, passing the house.

"Oh, Gretta, is that you? You knew father had taken her up to the city?"

"To the city? What for? When?" Gretta asked, all in a breath, as she turned back and came up the path to where Katharine sat.

"Yesterday."

Katharine glanced warningly at her mother's white-haired father, standing not far away, with his back to the girls. As she did so, he bent, steadying himself with his cane, to pull a weed from the turf. Then, with an effort, he stood erect again—a fine old figure still, and lifted his face to the morning as if he loved it.

"He mustn't be worried," she went on softly. "We call it that she's gone for rest and change, and I hope it's nothing more; but Doctor Whidden said there were things about her case that he couldn't understand. He was afraid it might be—very serious; so they've gone to the city to stay until they can get an appointment with the specialist that he

recommended. That's all I know—yet."

"You poor girl!" Gretta sympathized, dropping down on the top step. She looked like a big forget-me-not in her dainty blue linen frock, with her doll-like face uplifted. Involuntarily Katharine glanced down at her own morning gown, feeling glad that it was at least crisp and clean. Gretta was so pretty!

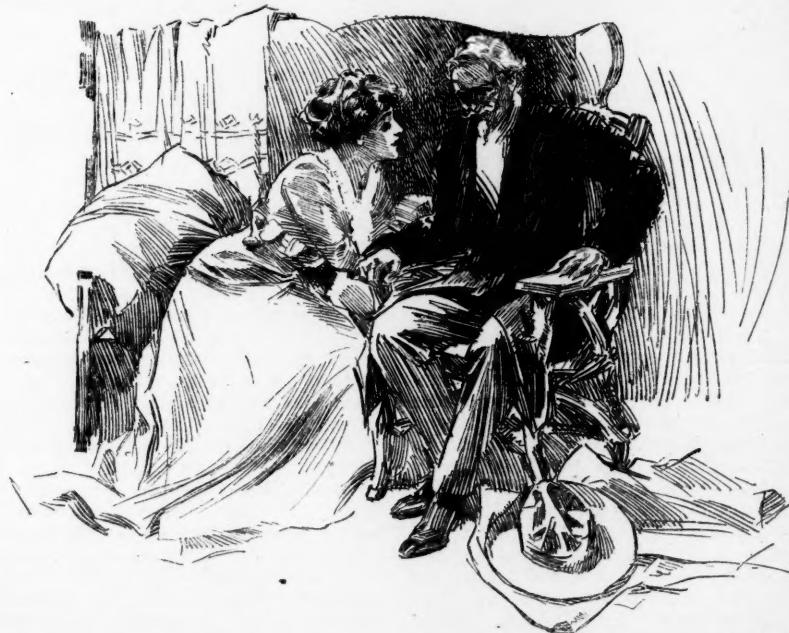
"I never dreamed there was anything like that," Gretta was saying. "Didn't it make her worse, having that cake sale here Saturday? What possessed you to do that, Katharine?"

Katharine gave a rueful smile. "I didn't," she answered. "Mother had it here, herself. I was only her proxy. She was in charge, you know, and when she was taken ill that morning, there was no one but me to see to it. Mrs. Bartelme—she's president of the Aid Society—had gone to the city with Mrs. Walford, and they wouldn't be back

till two o'clock—the very hour of the sale. So I went down to the vacant store on Main Street where Mr. Walford had said the ladies might have the sale, and found it in an impossible condition. It hadn't been cleaned, at all, and when I told mother about that, she just insisted that I go back and put a notice on the door that the cake sale would be held in our front yard."

"Oh! And then it rained?"

"And then it rained—just as everything was set out under the poplar tree. Mrs. Woodell had come over, by that time, and offered to sell the cakes for me; so I was upstairs with mother, and, when I realized that it was raining, before I could get downstairs, the whole cake sale had been moved into our dining room, and there were people all through the house. And the worst of it was, things weren't ready. The cloth on the dining table, where they had put the cakes, was an old one, not



"Oh, no—don't be sorry," he protested.

perfectly ~~fresh~~, and, just as I was noticing that, in walked Mrs. Bartelme and Mrs. Walford, all tired and warm because they had been down to the Main Street place first."

Gretta smothered a wicked chuckle. "In the rain, too!"

"No; that was another trying thing about it. As soon as things were inside, it stopped raining—a regular April shower in August. Well, you should have seen Mrs. Bartelme! She gave one comprehensive look at things, took in that old tablecloth, and then turned her lorgnette on me, and said: 'When were *all these changes* made?'—just like that. Think how I felt!"

"Don't blame you. And your mother sick upstairs! H'm! Who's going to tend to the next sale, Katharine? Not you."

"I'll have to, I think, Gretta. It's for mother, you see. Of course I didn't tell her this bothering part. She just knows that we made eighteen dollars, and she was pleased about that."

"Well, you worked for it—and no thanks, either. I'd wash my hands of the whole thing, now, if I were you."

"No, you wouldn't, especially if you knew that the only way your mother could go away without worrying was by feeling that you had taken her responsibility. You see, no one else wants to do it, and really Mrs. Bartelme and Mrs. Walford acted quite different after they found out how things were. They hadn't even heard that mother was ill, and Mrs. Walford said she had no idea of the condition that store was in, when she offered it. She imagined it a clean, empty room. She's having a man get it ready, now, for next Saturday's sale. That's the last one of the season, you know, and mother's hoping we'll make enough to pay off the rest of the hundred dollars the Aid Society pledged to the church. The only thing that troubles me is that Mrs. Bartelme insists on my taking all the orders I can get, and then making people bake cakes to fill them, and I'm afraid I can't get enough cakes promised."

"You're good," said Gretta, making a wry face. "Wish I were! I'd help

you, though, bad as I am, only I shan't have a minute. Jane Blair—my chum at college, you know—and her brother are coming for the week-end, and two or three others from the city, and I'm going to have a little frolic for them tomorrow evening—Friday. By the way, I want you to come, Katharine. I hope you'll hear something good from your mother, before that. And, oh—I almost forgot the greatest news of all! David Strong is coming to Bloomingvale very soon. Cousin Rob wrote me from Liverpool just before they sailed for home."

"David!" The color of surprise flooded Katharine's face. "Mother had a letter from him within two weeks, and he never said a word about it."

"That's just it. I guess he thought he'd surprise us all, but Rob gave him away. He wrote that he believed that David was planning to go to the hotel when he got here and wouldn't mother make him come to our house, instead? So, of course, we shall. Rob's grown awfully fond of him in these two years abroad."

Katharine was silent. David Strong belonged to her home—not to Gretta's. He had come to live with the Birdsalls nine years before, when he was barely seventeen, just the age of Katharine's brother, Thad. Because David's father and mother were both gone, the Birdsalls had taken him straight to their hearts, and three years later, when an uncle had unexpectedly left him the legacy of a university education, it had seemed almost as hard to let David go as it was to say good-by to Thad himself, a year afterward, when business ambition carried him off to the Pacific coast. Something of this was flashing through Katharine's mind.

Through all these six years, David had never come back. Several times it had been planned, and each time some new set of circumstances had prevented, but his letters to Mrs. Birdsall had been like those of a son to his mother, and his messages and foreign postal cards to Katharine had showed—well, whatever they had showed, it had never once occurred to her that, when he did come,



*"And then it rained—just as everything was set out under the poplar tree."*

he could possibly be anywhere else than in their home. Surely, just because he had been tutoring Gretta's rich little New York cousin, and had been abroad with him for two years, that was no reason.

"I guess David's developed into a splendid fellow," Gretta went on. "Uncle Dick thinks his influence on Rob has been perfectly great."

Suddenly Katharine gave an irrelevant ripple of laughter. "Oh, Gretta!" she cried. "Do you remember the time David fell down our back steps with the milk pail in his hand? He and Thad took turns milking the little Jersey cow,

that summer, you know. It didn't hurt him a bit, but he was so disgusted to think we saw him! I can think just how he turned on us and said: 'Laugh, girls, laugh!'"

"M'm, yes," Gretta admitted. "I don't believe I'd remind him of such things as milking cows, though, when he comes, Katharine. Think! David has his doctor's degree, now. Dear me!" she broke off suddenly. "I didn't have a minute and see how I've stayed! I'll telephone, Katharine, to find out how your mother is."

As she turned to go, she found herself face to face with Katharine's

grandfather, who had come strolling over the lawn just then.

"What's the hurry, Gretta?" he asked in his jovial way. "Heaven's full of days, and they're all coming this way."

But Gretta was already at the gate, waving farewell, and Katharine lingered just long enough to tell her grandfather the news about David, before she turned back into the house. She was smarting under the nettle of condescension sometimes felt in Gretta's manner, since she had been away at college, leaving Katharine at home.

The lonely, anxious day went on, and another came. Friday evening found Katharine still waiting for word from her mother. The next day was the cake sale. She had taken orders for thirty cakes, and only twenty-five were promised.

It seemed painfully incongruous to be troubling about such matters, but, even as she was thinking this, it came to her that making a success of to-morrow's cake sale was the only thing she could possibly do for her mother just now, and she made up her mind not to cancel the five orders, as she had thought of doing, but to bake the extra cakes that were needed as fast as she could.

Gretta had already been telephoned that Katharine could not join in the frolic that night; so, after tea was over and her grandfather comfortably settled on the veranda, Katharine covered her white gown with a long, pink gingham apron, and began her task.

The first cake was just in the oven, and the clock said half-past seven, when a voice called her to the front door. There on the steps was Gretta, in daintiest summer finery, and down at the gate were the college chum, the college chum's brother, and a half dozen other young people.

"You simply must come with us, Katharine," Gretta coaxed. "Listen! I've had a wire from Rob that David will be here on the eight-o'clock train, and we're going down to meet him now—the whole bunch of us. He'll be the lion of the evening. Pull off that apron and come along. It will take your mind from worrying about your mother."

Afterward, when Katharine was beating away at the second cake, alone in the kitchen, she tried to remember just what she had said to Gretta, and how she had managed to make the jolly crowd go on without her, before the rush of tears had come. And why was it, now, that she had to keep stopping to wipe her eyes? One would think, from the way she was acting, that the bad news she was dreading had really come. Perhaps it would be good news, after all. And what did it matter, anyway, about David, if he would rather go to Gretta's beautiful house? She threw back her head and smiled—a brave, defiant little smile—at the kitchen door, which, at that instant, as if in answer, swung wide open.

There on the steps—the very steps he had tumbled down, long before—stood David—the same, and not the same; big and smiling and happy, and yet with something like tears in his laughing eyes.

"Katie!" he said. "Is it little Katie?"

"Oh!" cried Katharine. "It's David! Grandfather, come and see what's happened!"

But grandfather did not hear. He sat still on the front porch, all unknowing, while David in the kitchen was telling how he had jumped off at the crossing, instead of going on to the downtown station, and had taken the short cut through the fields in the old way. The light in the kitchen, he said, had suggested stealing in there.

"I couldn't wait another minute—not long enough to walk around the house," he confessed. "I thought 'twould be your mother."

"And 'twas only her proxy!" Katharine pouted.

"Only!" It was wonderful how boyish and admiring a Ph. D. could look! Then, instantly, her face had clouded, and she was telling David all the anxious story about her mother. And then—but, by that time, they had reached the front veranda, and Katharine's grandfather was shaking David's hand as if he could never let it go.

After that, in the hurry of question and answer, Katharine began to explain



*"Katie!" he said. "Is it little Katie?"*

why she was baking cake at that time of night, and suddenly, with a guilty pang, she remembered Gretta's party and how they had all gone down to the station to lionize David.

"You'll have to go over there for a while, David," she said, when she had told him about it. "Gretta'll be so disappointed!"

David seemed to be thinking it over and Katharine realized that she had expected him to say no.

"All right," he concluded, "I'll go, and you can have a chance to finish those cakes. But I want to come back. Would an hour and a half from now be too late?"

The wonder was that the cakes which Katharine baked during the next hour

and a half came out exactly as they should and were all standing, frosted and tempting, on the kitchen table, at the appointed time. Katharine slipped off her apron and was waiting on the veranda, when David came up the walk.

He was close to her before he spoke. Then he took both her hands in his, as if he had been away another six years, and said in a low voice:

"Good news from your mother, Katie! No operation necessary. The doctor saw her late this afternoon, and he's sure he can fix her out all right, with rest and time."

"Oh, David! How did you hear?"

"Long-distance talk with your father. That's what I went downtown for. He was going to wire you, but he

said this was better. He talked from their room in the hotel, and your mother was lying on the bed, feeling quite comfortable. They'll be home Monday."

The moonlight fell on Katharine's happy face, and David saw why it was that she could not answer.

"And I saw Gretta," he went on, feeling that it would be easier for Katharine. "Her mother was very kind; she insisted on my staying there, but I told her I couldn't. I had my bag taken over to the hotel, but, Katie, your mother sent word that, as soon as she got home, I was to come here and have my old room. Of course, I'd rather do that than anything else in the world, but I'm afraid it wouldn't be right, when she's not well."

"I think that would help her to get well. You're just like Thad to her," said Katharine shyly.

"Oh, Thad! Tell me the latest from Thad. Can we sit down here and talk?"

It all seemed so sweet and natural, just as if he had been growing older there in Bloomingvale, instead of traveling over the world, taking degrees. At first grandfather joined in the talk,

but, soon, tired with the effort of hearing, he leaned back in his armchair, declaring that he could get more fun out of watching their happy faces. And even after that, another hour was talked away in the moonlight before they knew it.

"Don't you know how we used to measure our heights by marks on the door?" said David at last. "I've been measuring you on my memory, ever since I saw you. That's true, Katie. Now she's seventeen, I'd say, and she looks about so; now she's eighteen, nineteen—you're twenty, this year. And I had you marked just right—just so tall, cheeks just so pink, eyes just so shiny, hair just so thick and brown. Don't they call you Katie any more?"

"No, Doctor Strong," she answered saucily. "I'm Katharine, now—except to grandfather."

"And to me."

"Katie," said grandfather's gentle voice. He had been dozing a little in his chair. "Katie, don't you think, considering the journey David had, we ought to say good night to him? Heaven's full of days, you know, and they're all coming this way."



### Gypsy Days

UP and down, through the town,  
Loiter days like gypsies brown;  
Pitch their tents beside the road,  
Lazily their packs unload;  
Show their laces, cobweb spin,  
Silks of mist shot through with sun,  
Lift out pearls and amethysts,  
String rose corals on their wrists.  
Colors bold—maple-gold  
Edged with russet, fold on fold,  
Some days wear; some scarlet choose;  
Others brown of splendid hues;  
While still others, gloomy, proud,  
Wrap their heads in purple cloud.  
All too soon comes a noon  
When to gayly whistled tune,  
Picking up their light'ned load,  
Once again they take the road,  
So the days of autumn brown  
Pass, like gypsies, through the town.

Alice E. Allen.



## The Reminiscences of Katie, a Servant Girl

As Told to Anne O'Hagan

### VII.

#### THE END OF BOB FORGOTSON

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

OF course, ma'am, all the years I've lived in this country I naturally had some young men payin' me attention. Some of them were Joey's friends, and some I met at a cousin's house that lived out Flatbush way. I guess I've mentioned him to you once before. He was the one that those three ladies I lived with tried hard to think up something sentimental about. He was a nice boy, my cousin Michael, an' he married a real nice girl with a big family of brothers an' sisters an' cousins, an' to drop into their house was like goin' to a party generally.

It was one of her brothers that was most—I don't know how to express it exactly, but what I mean is he wasn't easy to shake as any of the other young men had been. He was a real nice fellow—sober, steady, an' always sure of good wages. An', besides, he had a real sweet disposition, full of fun an' joky, but kind. Sometimes I used to wonder why it was I couldn't like

George better. He was certainly awful attentive to me. I could have gone to a dance every Saturday night if I'd wanted to; an' Sunday afternoons in summer there wasn't a pleasure resort from the Bronx to Rockaway that I wasn't welcome to choose. He gave me a real pretty plush manicure set one Christmas, an' once he wanted to give me a watch. But I wouldn't take that—although he put it on the ground of our bein' family connections.

Annie, my sister-in-law, thought I was awful silly not to come to some understandin' with George, an' she used to ask me if I thought I was likely to do better by waitin'. Annie was never one to spare your feelin's, an' she knew all our ages to a dot, an' sometimes used to twit me with the length of time I'd been over.

It was a little while after Mrs. Van Vorst had taught the chief to keep his distance, that George suddenly talked to me serious about ourselves.

"Katie," said he, "I've been goin' with



*Annie used to ask me if I thought I was likely to do better by waitin'.*

you as steady for the past eight years as you'd let me, haven't I?"

"Well, you can't say I've let you, regular," I answered him, quick as a flash, for I didn't intend to have him sayin' I'd led him on an' had taken his time an' his presents, an' meant nothin' by it.

"No," George answered me, "I can't say that you have. If you don't want anythin' more to do with me, why, I don't know that I've got any kick comin'. But you must've known all this time that I wasn't goin' with any other girls, an' you must have known the reason why. I ain't much of a hand to talk, Katie. But neither of us is gettin' younger, an' I'm earnin' my three an' a half a day six days a week an' fifty-two weeks in the year, an' there's a little flat not far from your brother, Joey's. What do you say, Katie? Will

you come over with me an' see it?"

I sorter hesitated. After all, what was I waitin' for. Did I want to be a hired girl all my life? An' what better was I likely to find than George? But, though all those things passed through my mind, an' told me I'd be a fool to let him go, yet I couldn't twist my lips to say that I'd go with him to look at that flat. I felt miserable, for him an' myself, too. I couldn't speak, an' I felt the tears stingin' my eyes. I just shook my head.

George got sorter gray-colored, an' swallowed hard once or twice, an' he said: "Well, if you mean that, it's no use my wastin' any more time. If you won't, there's some that will."

"Many an' many of them, George," I answered him. "An' she'll be a lucky one that does. Only—only it can't be me."

"It's that damn Kilgore," said George.

I can't tell you how that made me feel. I was hot with anger an' yet I had a sorter scared feelin', too, as if it might be true. I just opened my mouth an' heard myself sayin':

"You haven't got the right to say that, George. You haven't got the right."

"I've got the right to break his face for him," growled George, but after a while he begged my pardon, quite like the gentleman, for talkin' to me like that, an' went off.

An' I spent a good part of that night in thinkin' about what he'd said: "It's that damn Kilgore." It almost seemed

before mornin' that that was what it was. An' I can tell you the prospect didn't look very pleasant to me. If you were a workin' girl past twenty-six, an' thinkin' how you'd like a home of your own an' children an' all that, an' your man's pipe on the kitchen mantelpiece, an' him a-comin' in of an evenin', it's sorter hard to face the fact that you can't take any offers because of some one that doesn't make you any offers at all. An' yet I had a queer feelin' that Bernard Kilgore liked me pretty well. But my common sense kept tellin' me that I was a foolish, vain thing to suppose it. Hadn't he had every chance in the world to tell me so any time these last eight years?

That night at dinner I heard his name again. It was just a dinner of gentlemen—the chief, Mr. Ross, from his office, an' one or two others of his assistants, the Reverend Doctor Baker, who was one of those most interested in what he called "cleanin' up the police department," and Mr. Baird, the rich Mr. Baird, that everybody always wanted to be chairman of public committees.

The dinner had been arranged so that the men from the district attorney's office could meet Mr. Baird, whose daughter was a school friend of Mrs. Van's. Mrs. Van sat at the foot of the table until time for coffee, an' she withdrew, leavin' the gentlemen to their discussion. I still moved around the table with the cigars an' liqueurs. I wasn't payin' much attention to the talk until all of a sudden I heard young Mr. Ross say:

"There's one man on the force could tell us a lot about that if he would. That's Kilgore."

I don't know why I was so astonished to hear his name that I kept on a-pourin' Benedictine into a glass that was already filled, but that's what I did. Luckily for me, it was Mr. Sinclair's glass an' not one of the strange gentlemen, an' he just sopped up the mess with his napkin an' brought me to myself with a quick little joke. But I was listenin' more to what Mr. Ross was sayin' than to anythin' else.

Mr. Baird had asked him how Kilgore could help, an' he was answerin':

"He's one of the few men on the force who has escaped corruption, an' who has been made to pay for it. I first made his acquaintance at the time of the Rossatena murder, an' he's a remarkable chap. I've seen a good deal of him since. Alert, fearless, an' shrewd—he's the ideal stuff for the force. He's easy-goin', too, an' not much of an ethical philosopher, so that I don't know exactly how it has happened that he has refused to lend himself to the graftin' upon vice. But he has, absolutely. An' when Forgotson an' Nichols an' the men all along the line discovered that he couldn't be made to fall in with the system, they vowed to break him. They've never had a chance to prefer any technical charges against him—the fellow's never a minute late to roll call, an' his uniform is as neat as a new pin. He's never given them the tiniest loophole by which to catch him. But they've made things as disagreeable as possible for him, have failed to promote him, have shunted him off to the most inaccessible parts of Greater New York, an' have told him in so many words that he might as well get off the force for he'll never get ahead on it."

"An' you say that he refuses to testify against them, to bear witness against the whole pernicious system?" It was Mr. Baird that said this in a sorter grumblin' way. He was a little, puffy man, with a pink face that seemed to spring, sorter surprised, out of a nest of white hair. "That's very strange. He cannot be much of a reformer."

"Oh, he doesn't set up for much of a reformer," said Mr. Ross. "He'd regard it as disloyal to his clan to testify against his superiors. An', of course," Mr. Ross ended slyly, "reformers are troubled with no such scruples."

Well, I had to go out of the room then, an' I had very little excuse for enterin' it any more that evenin'. Once the chief rang for fresh cracked ice, an' once they needed a new assortment of apollinaris, but both times, though I



*Luckily for me, it was Mr. Sinclair's glass an' not one of the strange gentlemen.*

hung around as long as I dared, they were talking about somethin' else besides Bernard. At the very end of the evenin', however, Mr. Baird mentioned him again, when I'd been called into the room to take out Mrs. Van Vorst's white Angora kitten that was tryin' to climb onto the gentlemen's laps.

"This—er—Kilroy is his name?" Mr. Baird was sayin'—and Mr. Ross corrected him "Kilgore"—"This Kilgore can, of course, be subpœnaed, if the governor appoints an investigatin' committee. An' I think that popular clamor has at last become of such volume that his excellency will have no resource but to appoint one."

It was as good as a book to hear Mr. Baird talk.

Well, I heard Mr. Ross say somethin' about not bein' able to get much out of an unwillin' witness, an' about there bein' other evidence to be had of the same sort as Kilgore's, only it would come from acknowledged soreheads;

an' then I had to go out of the room again, havin' dilly-dallyed about catchin' Snowball as long as I had the face to.

I watched the papers pretty close for a few days after that, an', sure enough, one mornin' in April, there was a great headline across them all:

"The Governor Appoints a Police Investigation Committee."

Mr. Van Vorst an' all our friends were very jubilant, for it was a triumph for Mr. Sinclair an' a pretty serious business for Mr. Bob Forgotson, though, accordin' to the papers, he laughed an' swaggered an' blustered an' made fun of the governor an' of everybody mixed up in the affair.

Well, then a funny thing happened. Suddenly, from havin' been the under dog on the police force, Bernard began to be the great pet of the head of the department an' all the captains an' lieutenants. There was nothin' too good for him. He was brought back from

Staten Island, an' the wonder to me was that they didn't offer him an automobile to patrol his beat in, they were so set on makin' things easy for him. Mrs. Kilgore, bless her heart, didn't think it was anythin' but recognition of Bernard's work, comin' a little late in the day, but, nevertheless, not to be sneezed at. But I felt pretty sure in my own mind that it was Mr. Forgotten's way of tryin' to stop Bernard's mouth when the investigation should begin.

Mostly I went up to see the old lady at times when there was no chance of Bernard's bein' home. But one Sunday afternoon toward the end of April when I went into her neat little flat I found him sittin' there in his civilian's clothes. It was really funny. It seems he'd had a touch of cold—nothin' to amount to anythin', not half nor quarter as bad as he'd often been expected to patrol a snowy country beat with—but his captain had noticed it at roll call that mornin', an' had sent him home with instructions to take care of himself an' not to report for thirty-six hours.

"Oh, I'm the white-haired boy of our precinct, now," laughed Bernard, when he was tellin' about it.

"Deed, then," chimed in his mother, "it's no more than it oughter to be. An' your captain's a fine man, an' probably has boys of his own that's taught him to be careful about colds an' such like. Now, what's there funny in that?" she finished, as Bernard burst into a loud laugh, at this opinion of his captain.

Bernard petted her a little, an' by an' by he asked me if I wouldn't like to go for a walk in the park for a little while? I said yes, an' he went to get his hat.

"You'll bring her back to tea with us, Bernard, won't you?" said his mother, when we were leavin'. She seemed in a twitter of happiness that day.

I tried to say somethin' about havin' to be home or meetin' my sister, Maggie, but Bernard said that he was goin' to try to bring me home with him, an' that was all that his mother seemed to pay any attention to.

Do you know the north end of the Park, ma'am, where it's kinder wilder than down among the flower beds an' fountains an' goat carriages? It was up there that we went, an' it was awful sweet an' pretty. They've got wild flowers planted along the edges of the road, an' there's rocks an' sorter rough steps, an' all like that, until you'd almost think you're in the real country.

We walked in an' out among the paths, an' by an' by we sat down on a bench that was placed very high up on a sorter hill. You could look down off that hill an' see the roads an' the drives windin' away, an' a bright pond of water at the foot of it, an' across the trees, that wasn't in full leaf yet, to the city, all sunny an' smilin' an' holiday-makin'-of-a-Sunday.

It seemed to me I'd never been in so sweet a spot. It was one of those warm days when little puffs of air blow against your face as soft as if a baby was pattin' you. It was the kinder day to make you feel happy just by yourself.

We'd been talkin' about one thing an' another, about how well his mother was lookin', an' about how Joey was prosperin', puttin' up little frame houses for himself out in Corona, an' how Maggie had stopped havin' anythin' more to do with that Farley.

Once a little brown boy had come along with a basketful of paper bags with peanuts in, an' Bernard bought a bag of peanuts for us to feed the squirrels with. They were the cunningest little things an' would come runnin' when we called them, an' stand on their hind legs an' take the nuts with one little forepaw while they sorter steadied themselves against our hands with their other.

An' once another boy came along with little bunches of red roses made up with green fern leaves. He was a pert little fellow, an' he says to Bernard:

"Buy one for your girl, mister."

An' Bernard says, laughing, that he'd buy two. An' he did. I felt that upset.

It was to get my mind off that that I



*"Buy one for your girl, mister."*

began tellin' him what I heard the gentlemen sayin' the night of the dinner at our house. He listened, very attentive. For a little time he didn't say anythin', an' then he said to me:

"I'd like to tell you all about it, an' I'd like to hear what you think."

It made a sorter ringin' sound in my ears, the way I felt when he said that, an' yet there wasn't much in the words themselves, was there? It was just the way he said them.

"Do you know how it happened, Katie, that I never could take money from unfortunates on the street, or from saloons that ran overtime, or gamblin' places or the like? I don't claim

to be any better than the other men on the force. For the most part, they're a good lot, strong, an' afraid of nothin', an' pretty quick with their wits. An' I'll admit to you that at first there didn't seem any great harm to me in lookin' the other way when you saw that the saloon on the corner was doin' a pretty brisk business at the side door of a Sunday mornin'. Probably the saloon-keeper was the brother of a friend of yours.

"That was a lot more likely than that you had friends in Mr. Baird's set. There ain't many policemen come out of the four hundred. An', as I say, it seemed unneighborly an' unfriendly to keep too close a watch out for little affairs like that. An' as for the women, God knows they had a fierce enough time without your houndin' them.

"Well, so far, so good. But pretty soon you came to find out that those people expected to have to pay you for your blindness, an' what's more, that your captain expected you to bring in the pay. An' he explained to you, in terms there was no misunderstandin', that he was expected to pass along the money, an' that certain parties were makin' a very good thing out of it. The way the captain put it to you, an' I'll admit to you, Katie, it used to sound sensible enough to me, was this:

"These guys," he says, "that think that there ain't goin' to be no drinkin' an' no gamblin' an' no vice in general, had better light outer New York an' outer the world for the matter of that. You can't change human nature, Barney, my boy, an' that's somethin' that the up-country jays that put the laws on the statute books don't seem to understand. They make a crime outer

what's just plain human nature. Well, it's our business to prevent crime, but as we are not the Lord Almighty we can't change human nature. What are we goin' to do about it? Why, we're goin' to use our common sense. If anybody runs a place that gets to be a howlin' nuisance in the neighborhood we're goin' to shut him up. But if he runs a place that gives no offense to anybody, an' just satisfies the cravin's of human nature for liquor or a game of cards, we're goin' to walk by on the other side of the street with our eyes directed ahead of us. Besides, the police force in this town has got enough to do, protectin' the citizens against real crime—shuttin' up anarchists' meetin's with Emma Goldmans talkin', catchin' burglars an' yeggmen, arrestin' speeders, an' all such things. So we leave "crime" alone, when "crime" doesn't mean anythin' but a discreet attention to the wants of human nature. Of course, we get paid for our blindness. I ain't got such a low opinion of my fellow men that I'd expect them to be ungrateful. They're grateful to us. They pay us a little somethin'. It's a blame sight less expensive to them at that than it would be to be put out of business. An' that there may be no unfairness in it all there's a fixed rate of payment an' a fixed proportion goes to you an' a fixed proportion to me, an' so on up the line. It's nothin' to be squeamish over, Bernard. An', what's more, little Bob has ways of makin' it unpleasant for patrolmen that are too delicate-stomached to play the game, mind you that.'

"That was what the captain said to me, Katie, an' that was how I saw it until—do you know when?"

I shook my head. I don't know why it was, but the kind sound of his voice, as though he cared a great deal about me, took my own voice away from me.

"I'll tell you, then," he said. "Do you remember the time when—that woman came to our house for you—the woman that came in a hack that I saw from the window?"

I nodded again. That was one thing I should never forget as long as I live.

Even yet after so many years, even yet when I'm old an' safe an' wise, I sometimes have a dream at night of that young green girl I was an' of the pit I might've walked into.

"Well, that changed everything for me," Bernard went on. "All those things were not merely little failin's of human nature to be overlooked by the police force the way you would overlook your brother's grouchiness of a mornin' or your friend's forgettin' to pay you the two dollars that he borrowed last Saturday. They were crimes, they were pitfalls yawnin' before young girls an' young lads, an' you—a policeman—were on hand to keep them from doin' their devil's work in the world. That was the way it looked to me after I'd seen how nearly you were the victim of the captain's easy-goin' system."



*Mrs. Van Vorst gave me solid silver teaspoons an' forks.*

I just sat still, lookin' off across the park to the roofs of the city up north of it. They all seemed to me to be sorter shimmerin' in blue sky an' gold sunshine, a little the way you imagine heaven.

"An' that's why I refused to fall in with the system, Katie, an' that's why they made up their mind to break me, But I said to myself that they'd never have the chance if watchfulness an' wakefulness could prevent. An' now, of course, they're afraid that I'm goin' to testify against them at the investigation, an' they're tryin' at the eleventh hour to get solid with me."

He didn't say any more, an' I sat there on the bench beside him like a stupid gawk, not able to think of anything to say. An' by an' he took hold of my hand.

"Katie"—his voice sorter trembled when he said it—"Katie, haven't you got anything to say to me?"

"What do you want me to say?" I asked, shakin' all over as if I had the ague.

"Why," said Bernard, sorter surprised, "that you care something about the sorter of man that I am, an'—an' about me—an' that you'll have me, Katie!"

"I couldn't say it until you'd asked me," I said, half sobbin'. "An', oh, Bernard—it's been so long. Why hadn't you ever asked me before?"

It was an awful thing to say, I guess, an' a lady wouldn't have done it, but the words were outer my mouth before I knew it. He was hangin' onto my hand like grim death, an' his face was shinin'. But at that question of mine he looked sorter surprised.

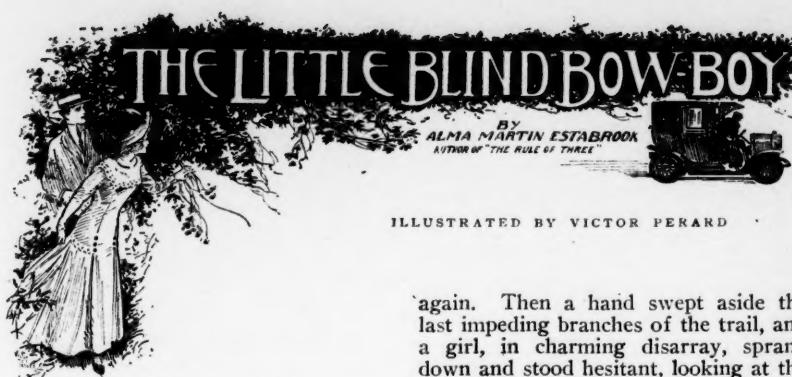
"Why, hadn't mother ever told you?" he asked. "How my father hurted himself when I was a little shaver an' lost his head entirely, an' how she could never bear to put him away in any public institution, an' when I grew up I promised to take care of him in a private one as long as he lived? It's ta-

ken a lot of money, an' I didn't have the right to ask anybody to marry me with that on my shoulders, an', not knowin' from one week's end to another whether they'd manage to get me off the force. But he has been cured—it's in all the British medical papers about the modern miracle, an' he's not so old but he can find enough to do to keep him an' my mother, with what we can spare them. It's funny she never told you. But she's that way—close-mouthed about trouble an' sorter ashamed of it."

Well, that's about all. We did a lot of talkin', but I don't think we said much more. I went home with him to tea, an' I was pleased as Punch to be able to promise "to use my influence" with Mr. Van Vorst an' Mr. Sinclair to keep him from bein' a witness at the investigation. There was plenty, he said, who knew all that he knew, an' more, an' who'd be glad of the chance to tell what they knew. It was funny that he should have that feelin' about not wantin' to talk against his own kind when they had used him so ill. But that's Bernard all over.

Mrs. Van Vorst actually kissed me when I told her, an' she gave me solid silver teaspoons an' forks. I sometimes laugh to myself an' wonder how long it was before she paid for them. I don't believe anything could ever teach Mrs. Van not to run into debt, but they've a good deal more money now since Mr. Van has gone into private practice an' is lawyer for the S. S. & C. Railroad.

Of course, you know how Bernard has gone right up in his profession under the new police administration. There's talk of his bein' made one of the deputies of the new commissioner. My sister-in-law, Annie, says, if he is, she hopes I'll learn to forget that I was a servant girl for so many years, an' to talk an' to act like one who was used to bein' a lady. But I don't think I'm likely to. An' sometimes I misdoubt if the way to begin to be a lady is by gettin' what you have been.



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

A WHITE owl swept from pine bōle to pine bōle; a gray owl, ruffed and angry, winged away, hooting; something small and furry scudded across a starry space on the carpet of pine needles; and the moon winked lazily through her ragged veil of clouds. Never was such depth of silence. Never such completeness of isolation. Had you been there, you must—at a soft sound on the bracken-bordered road—have expected, for a fanciful instant, Mab in her chariot, or a knight's brave steed, or a lady's cabriolet, rolling softly.

You certainly would not have expected a taxicab.

Noislessly it slid through the luminous dusk, its lamps unlit, its driver having at once a curious air of mystery and the natural manner of one who seeks a fare. Moving slowly and carefully, he leaned forward, his glance questioning the farther reaches of shadowy wood. He had a grizzled jaw and a humorous slant of the eyes, and, puckering his loose lips, he made a sound which fitted the forest to so complete a nicety it must have deceived even the wood creatures themselves.

Then he waited, the car brought to a full stop.

Out of the silent woods steps immediately sounded, hurrying, hurrying, stumbling over roots, dislodging stones, catching themselves up and coming on

again. Then a hand swept aside the last impeding branches of the trail, and a girl, in charming disarray, sprang down and stood hesitant, looking at the taxicab.

"There isn't a second to lose," warned the boy with her—for all his breadth of shoulders and earnestness of face he was really only that, a rash, impressionable, attractive boy—and his arm swept her down to the car.

"All right, Mason," he said. "Make as quick a getaway as you can. They haven't missed us yet, but it won't take them long to do it." And he glanced anxiously up the sloping bank to the right, where, high on the wooded side of the hill, a tier of house lights glimmered like impish eyes a-twinkle at their own knowledge of things.

The car slid quickly forward, and, with the tremulous breath of one committed to an adventure, yet realizing for the first time its full gravity and import, the girl sank into her corner of the cab.

"Little brick!" murmured the boy worshipfully, and he squeezed her hand. Then, anxiously: "You're not afraid, are you?"

"Of them?" she queried, with a backward glance at the vanishing lights on the hill. "Of course I'm not."

"Not of me?" he asked, laughing tenderly.

Deliciously pretty and vivid and earnest she looked as she put back the film of white veil from her mist-gray eyes, and lifted them to his.

"Not of you."

"Then in Heaven's name, of what?" he insisted.

"Of something that doesn't seem to trouble *you*—a conscience," she replied, with a sigh.

"What's the matter with you, anyway, Sid? What *are* you worrying over?" he questioned, half impatiently.

"I'd be perfectly happy if it weren't for Gerry Rubush. I always said I'd play fair."

He bent over her as the car swept out from the forest into a narrow country road.



*He glanced up and saw Tom Scott loom suddenly above the heads of those between them.*

"We've played fair," he contended stoutly. "You know we have."

Her voice was adorable: "Do people ever *know* anything when they are as heady as we are? When we argued it all out, that it was fair to her for us to—*to do this*, were we reasoning or weren't we just *feeling*?"

"Darling!"

"Don't! You can't kiss away my sense of guilt, Hal. I—"

"Car following!" shouted the driver excitedly at the moment, and without waiting for instructions, he sent the machine along at a ripping speed, making further conversation impossible at the moment.

"They're after us, all right," cried young Tenbury, his eye to the glass in the back, his anxious gaze on the moon-spotted road, down which a small, dark dot was just visible. Then a rut jounced him back into his place and threw him into the corner where Sidney Baillie sat, clinging to the side of the car.

"Is it your Uncle Benjamin, do you think?" she screamed.

"It may be. Or it may be your Cousin Eleanor," he screamed back at her, as they flew in the air at a bridge. Then he caught her to him possessively. "Let 'em both come! Let 'em all come, if they want to! We're going to be married to-night if the whole outfit follows. Whose business is it but our own?"

"I'm not worrying about anybody but Gerry Rubush. We're not really answerable to our suddenly interested relatives, but we are answerable to her. Oh, how, *how* could you reach the betrothal point with her if you didn't care anything for her?"

"It's queer that it is so hard for you to see how it was when you always understand things so easily," he complained, with aggrievement.

Her laugh soothed him.

"You mean that in the three

and a half days we've known each other I've seemed to understand easily. Were ever two people so headlong? Think of running away after a three days' acquaintance! I wonder—oh, I wonder if—"

The car skidded and sent them into the corner, where it rammed them fiercely together. Orchards and meadows were sailing past, and the fences ran like thin, black lines of wavering threads.

"Quit wondering!" shouted he. "And quit worrying! We're losing 'em, all right. We've got the start. We'll shake 'em. Confound 'em!" he cried, flung about in the seat, his eyes glued to the slit.

Presently the rattling speed diminished slightly, and they ran more smoothly along a wider road they had reached by strategetic detour.

"Now," said he, "I'll tell you how it was with Gerry and me, though you must have seen it happen like that yourself—a little attention on a fellow's part, a little graciousness on the girl's, the clack, clack, of tongues coupling their names, everybody throwing them at each other's heads, and everything conducing to the intimacy, and, before they know it, they're as good as engaged, without a word of actual love having been spoken between 'em. D'yee see?"

She shook an unconvinced head.

"It never happens like that unless the girl is willing—unless she loves the man."

"Rubbish! She wasn't any worse hit than I. I swear it."

"She didn't show it, maybe. She's the kind not to. Nobody worth their salt ever does. But she cares. Oh, I'm beginning to be sure of it! *Sure of it!* We've broken her heart."

"Tom Scott was under her feet all the time we were at the Sperrys'. That doesn't look as if her heart was broken, does it?"

"Pride! Bravado! Pique!" she flung at him.

"And she was as jolly glad to avoid me as I was to keep away from her," he insisted.

"More pride! More bravado! More pique!"

"Oh, rot, Sid; you don't think she honestly cared!"

"I know she did. And the worst of it is a girl like that never stops caring. We've ruined her life, blighted all her hope, and broken her heart. *Can we expect to be happy?* And then there's Tom Scott, the best friend you ever had, you tell me, and you've lost his respect, too. He never in the world can understand such—love as ours."

"Not with library paste in his veins instead of blood," he grumbled.

"He'll never, never forgive you for falling in love with me at sight. It would take him years to accomplish the feat, with the most charming girl that ever existed. Even I could see that, with only the three days' acquaintance. So you've lost him, and you've mortally offended your uncle—who would give his eyes to have you marry Gerry Rubush; and it's my opinion we'd better—better turn right around and slip back and never let them know we came so near to making an awful mess of things."

"Sid! Are you crazy?" he cried.

"I'm just coming back to my senses," she answered, with a wan little smile. "Tell him to turn back, Hal. I simply can't play such havoc. I tell you I'll never forget Gerry's face when your uncle arrived so unexpectedly this morning and promptly announced that he was going to carry you off at once for Japan, instead of waiting till fall, as you had planned. It was positively tragic."

"Sure thing," said he cheerily. "She expected me to be making peace overtures to her within the hour. And she didn't want to go to Japan with us any more than I wanted her to go. See?"

"You can't tell me! She bore herself admirably, but she couldn't hide her love for you. Tom Scott saw it—that's what made him devote himself to her. He was so in sympathy with her, and so annoyed with you for being so much with me. Oh, she loves you, and if I were anything but a perfectly selfish,

heartless little wretch I'd take you straight back to her this minute and then—”

“But they've already missed us. That was undoubtedly some of 'em following us. She knows what we're up to, so we might as well go ahead and be married. Admitting that she cares for me—which I don't, Sid—it can't hurt her any worse to know that we want to marry than that we're married. That's so, isn't it?”

They had come into a much-traveled road of macadam. The driver had lit the lamps, and they were running easily, swiftly, speeding past cabins early asleep, past country churches, desolate and unlovely, past slow-going vehicles, and others hurrying homeward.

He caught her to him, he kissed, he soothed her, he laughed over her, scoffing at her qualms of conscience and overriding all her objections; but, in truth, he, too, was worried, something approaching a conscience was stirring in his own breast! What if Gerry Rubush really did care for him, he was asking himself. Good old Gerry, who had been such a fine sturdy, commonsense comrade. Who had seemed to take their affair quite as lightly as he had taken it, and to be as placidly acquiescent to the idea of their ultimate marriage. It was certainly a grisly thing to think of going back on her like this if she really loved him.

Yet when love had come as swiftly and as surely as it had come to him and Sidney Baillie, how the deuce could you—could you—

He gathered the slim little figure of the girl to him.

“Dear,” he said, “we've simply got to quit thinking about her. What's done can't be undone. We came an awful cropper. Nobody could help it, but the Lord, for making you like you are. I'd have felt a little more decent about it if I could have managed to get her off and talk things over plainly with her, but after we decided to skip out tonight, like this, she simply didn't give me a ghost of a chance. I tried. I honestly tried, Sid, but I couldn't get near her. But I left a letter to be given to

her to-morrow, explaining everything, you know.” He passed his hand across his forehead. “Lord, it wasn't easy—writing that letter,” he groaned.

She pressed his other hand sympathetically.

At the instant the taxicab suddenly darted forward, like it was pursued—as, indeed, it was—and with a warning shouted over his shoulder the driver sent it along at top speed.

“Get into the thick of things the minute we strike town,” commanded Hallam Tenbury, in excitement. “And lose 'em. Go to the Clairmont Hotel, side entrance, and keep in the shadows as well as you can. Open her up, man! They're gaining on us. But,” he cried jubilantly, a minute later, “we'll beat 'em in. We're all right! We're all right! We're walking right away from them.” And he dropped back into his place beside the girl.

He was flushed and winning and handsome, and she looked at him with her heart in her eyes.

“Poor, *poor girl!*” she whispered to herself. “To think of loving him as she does, and of losing him!”

Fifteen minutes later they drew up at the Clairmont, and Tenbury promptly vanished within in search of Grimley, the social Nestor of the town, whom he had called up by telephone late that afternoon and asked to attend to several minor details of the brief wedding service which was to take place at St. Mark's rectory. Grimley was also to act as one of the witnesses, and was to secure the presence at the rectory of little Mrs. Clarence Greenwood, one of the most charming young matrons in town, and a good friend of Hallam Tenbury's. Mrs. Greenwood also lived at the Clairmont.

With her eyes glued on the doors of the hotel, Sidney Baillie sat, carefully withdrawn into the shadows of the taxicab.

It was that liveliest, most glittering hour of the city's night—the theatre hour—and the hotel seemed the hub of the brilliant wheel of activity, whirring with color and life and beauty. But

little Sidney Baillie was conscious only of her own heart, beating alike in her throat, in her temples, and in her nervous finger tips.

Then across the line of her vision, so close that it seemed almost to have leaped from the back of the cab itself, there darted at the instant a most familiar figure—Tom Scott! It was he who had followed!

elopement, perhaps. Perhaps she had merely fainted, or had turned away, biting her lip till the blood showed. Oh, it was frightful to think of causing anguish like that! He had seen, and he had come, and now—now— With a little cry of many emotions, she fell back in the corner of the cab.

At the desk, at the moment, Tenbury was running his eyes over a note Grim-



*It was Gerry Rubush!*

Lean, angular, lithe, he pushed his way through the passing throng toward the hotel, determination writ heavily upon him. To her fevered imagination he suggested, in the instant, a curious mixture of a number of horribly destructive things; the angel with the sword, the Juggernaut, Nemesis, the shears of Atropos.

He had come to tell them they were breaking Gerry Rubush's heart! There could be no question of that. She had fallen in a long swoon at word of their

ley had left him explaining his absence and informing him that he would await him at the rectory, when he glanced up and saw Tom Scott loom suddenly above the heads of those between them. He saw the set of that determined jaw of Scott's, read the look in his eyes, and realized, as Sid had done, what brought him here.

Conflicting emotions also swept him in the fraction of a second he hesitated. To do him justice his preëminent feeling was one of shamed repentance, of

painful regret that any girl—least of all so fine a one as Gerry Rubush—should suffer through him. His heart ached with pain for her pain. He really had a flash of irresolution, an instant in which he considered several things. Then the love of Sidney Baillie flooded all his being, and made his pulses leap impellingly, and he knew that, come what would, and suffer who must, he could not give her up.

Crowding Grimley's note into his pocket, he dodged Scott in the crowd, and, making for the door, dashed across the sidewalk and leaped into the taxicab.

"To St. Mark's rectory!" he shouted. "And be quick about it!"

To his consternation the words were scarcely out and he in, when Tom Scott's tall person shot out from the hotel, threw itself across the sidewalk, and into a second cab drawn up there. And immediately the two took their places in the traffic of the street, the second car plainly in pursuit of the first.

Tenbury flung himself over the driver's seat.

"Lose 'em, can't you?" he cried. "Duck out of this when you get a chance and give 'em the slip. You can do it, can't you? Eh? All right, then, do it!"

Panting, and swearing innerly, uncommonly perturbed and uncommonly uncertain as to issues and outcome, he dropped down beside the small girlish figure in the shadowy corner of the taxicab, groping for her hand and pressing it rather limply.

"Never mind, we'll fix 'em yet," he declared.

She made no reply, and he turned anxiously upon her.

"See here, you're worried sick over the way things have come out, aren't you?" he demanded.

She whispered something incoherent behind the folds of the white veil which she had drawn more closely than ever about her face.

"Nobody's to blame," he urged. "Try not to worry. Try, dearest." He twisted about to watch the following

taxicab. "By George," he exclaimed jubilantly, "we're getting away from them! We're giving them the slip, all right! That was a clever turn Mason made just then. With a good open stretch of street, we'll beat to the rectory by ten minutes, or lose 'em for good."

He threw himself around and tried to draw her to him, but she struggled away from him, her hands against his breast.

"Look at me," she commanded, in an odd little voice.

He looked. He could have screamed like a lunatic or a woman; it was *Gerry Rubush!*

"You must have got in the wrong cab," she said.

Stupidly, dumbly he stared at her. It was so much worse than he had thought—she had actually come with Scott to plead her own cause, to make her own claim! It was unbelievable. A sickening sense of shame swept him, shame for himself and for her, that such a thing could be.

"My Lord, Gerry!" he muttered dazedly.

She averted her eyes while she tightened the disarranged folds of the veil which was so exactly like Sid's. Poor Sid, was she having to submit to Scott's confounded reproaches, he wondered. Then all thought of her fled, and he faced the benumbing moment before him.

"I'm afraid you can't understand—" he began, but she cut him short.

"It's *you* who can't do that!" she cried. "Oh, Hal, dear, will you try? Will you really try to—er—to put yourself in my place?" In her emotion she had laid her hand upon his arm.

In the dusk he felt himself blushing for her—a woman laying bare her soul before the man who did not love her.

"There are things we can't help," he stammered. "I know that, all right. But—er—"

"Yes, yes. Things that are beyond control. That sweep you away. That leave not a single mooring. I wouldn't have believed it. I was so sure of myself. I felt so able to cope with ev-



Tom Scott lifted Sidney Baillie down.

erything that came to me." Her fingers closed entreatingly about his arm. Her pleading eyes met his. Her voice was sweet and tremulous. "Don't blame me. I can't help it."

He patted her hand in silence. Words failed him.

"It's against all my training," she went on, "against my ideas and my ideals. It bewilders me that I—I, who thought myself so admirably controlled

—have let myself go like this. It seems so unthinkable, so unwomanly. Yet, after all, perhaps such love *isn't* a thing to be ashamed of." Her voice was wistful and defensive. "Maybe that's the way we were meant to love. Do you think so?"

It was the worst moment of his life. "You actually care like this!" he gasped.

"Didn't you see?" she questioned.

He shook his head, sick with the unutterable helplessness of it all; savage over the mess into which things had somehow got themselves, and dumb with the wonder of her love.

"What are we to do?" he heard himself demand of her.

It was a moment before she spoke, then her voice came appealingly:

"You *won't* ask me to give up my life's happiness?"

He writhed. He agonized. He hesitated. The brutality of it all smote him.

She spoke again, straightening herself in her shadowy corner, her eyes shining, a broken little laugh slipping over her lips.

"Because," said she, "it won't make the least difference if you do."

"You mean——"

"Surely, Hal, you know what I mean."

There was a long, mocking, miserable silence between them, the car slipping in and out among the other hurrying vehicles of the street. It was she who again broke the silence. Her voice was still gentle, still moving, but a new note of spirit rang in it:

"I don't, oh, I *don't* want you to mis-judge me—it will break my heart if you do—but I'll still have to—to go on to the rectory, just the same."

Indeed, they had already reached there. The taxicab drew up at the curb, the lights of many windows shone out cheerfully, and in the library, close to the long French doors, were Grimley and Mrs. Greenwood, talking animatedly with the rector himself.

Hallam Tenbury sat as if he were glued to the seat.

The girl laid a light hand upon his arm.

"Aren't you coming?" she asked, in a curious little voice.

He got heavily out. He lifted her down. The world was whizzing about

his head. Inside of him was pandemonium.

"Gerry——" he began resolutely, but she was leaning forward listening to a sound down the quiet street.

The second taxicab came whirring up, and, springing out, Tom Scott—a new and astonishing Tom Scott—lifted Sidney Baillie down and, handing her promptly over to Tenbury, put a proprietary hand beneath Gerry Rubush's elbow.

"By George," he cried, with a huge transforming grin, "did anybody *ever* hear of anything like it; you and Sidney Baillie running off from Gerry and me, and Gerry and I running off from you and Sidney Baillie, and the four of us running off from your Uncle Benjamin? But come along and let's get married first and talk about it afterward. Why, bless me, there's old Grimley, good as his word, and Mrs. Greenwood, too!"

"They're here for you?" gasped Tenbury.

Tom Scott nodded and laughed. "And for you, too? It beats the dickens!"

"It's positively breath-taking!" exclaimed little Sidney Baillie, with twinkling stars for eyes and lips that could scarcely shape themselves to speech, so tremulous they were with laughter.

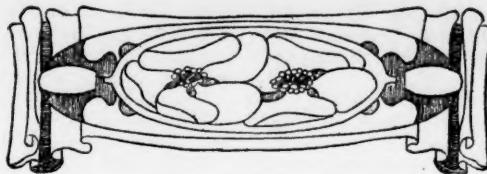
"Come along," urged Scott briskly, "we're ready, aren't we?"

But Gerry Rubush stood gazing speechlessly at Hallam Tenbury, and Hallam Tenbury stood gazing speechlessly at Gerry Rubush.

"Oh, lordy! *Lordy!*" they finally brought forth simultaneously, and they fell against each other and laughed, pealingly, comprehensively, hysterically, till the quiet street echoed with their laughter, and the rector and the witnesses looked anxiously forth from the wide front door.

Then they all went in together.





## The Conquest of the Cat

By Mary Heaton Vorse

Author of "Where's Ann?" "The Setter Pup," etc.

I CAN remember perfectly the first time I saw her. We were sitting on the piazza one moonlight night, when my eyes were arrested by a white thing moving in the shadow—moving slowly and stealthily. Then there was a rush through a moonlit space, a jump as light as a feather over the fence, and there the creature poised a moment, silvered by the moonlight—a wonderful, fantastic beast, pure white. Then it jumped again, and was gone, and my little niece, Agnes, clapped her hands.

"There's the White Princess!" she said. "Edith told me about her. She's a princess, and she's enchanted to live a thousand years like a white cat, and that's why you can't come near her, and that's why she's so snow-white."

"Cats?" said my sister Maria suspiciously. "Where does this cat come from? What's she doing around our place?"

"She isn't doing anything, Aunt Maria," replied Edith, "she's just wild."

"Well, I hope she'll stay wild, then," replied Maria, with spirit. "I'd rather take the measles than go through the menagerie epoch again that we've had in this house! I wondered what you and Agnes were doing down there together," Maria went on to my daughter. "It didn't seem natural to see you and Agnes together. You were trying to coax the white cat, that's what you were trying to do!"

"Well, you needn't be afraid, Aunt

Maria," Edith retorted, "for even if she'd speak to me, which she won't, Piker'd soon be after her."

"Edith says," Agnes piped up, "that white cats make her think of things in poetry. She thinks it would be nice to have a white cat to sit in your lap—it'd look nice. White cats contrast so nicely with one's complexion."

Edith shot an awful look at Agnes.

"You see!" cried Maria. "You see, Editha! Now's your time to put your foot down! Edith's manoeuvring to get that animal into the house!"

"I suppose if I stopped to admire a mountain," Edith said sarcastically, "Aunt Maria'd warn you about my bringing it home!"

But for all Maria's sour predictions, the white cat continued to be a wild thing. Once in a while it would make a raid near the back door in search of food, and then would be off like a white line of light if any one came near it. So we got used to its presence around the place, and used to rather watch for it, while Edith invented charming stories about it, and we all got to calling it the "White Princess."

This only shows how a cat can put the cometha on you for her own ends.

One day Edith was entertaining friends of my eldest son on the piazza. Osborn is in college and brings his friends over for tea, and the young people were enjoying themselves, when all of a sudden Agnes dashed up.

"Oh, Edith," she cried, "the White Princess has six little white princesses! They're up in the loft of the barn in a box!"

Edith received this news coolly, for, after all, it is rather prosaic of a cat that one has woven all sorts of mysteries about to have six kittens in a box in the barn.

"They're almost all white," Agnes chirped on, "except that some of them have little black spots on them. Oh, isn't it too sweet for anything for the White Princess to have got a lot more white princesses? Don't you want to come and see them?" Agnes included them all in a bright little glance.

She darted off, and presently reappeared with two feeble, unattractive, crawly little things. They sprawled around on the floor on slender legs that wouldn't carry them, and wavered their blind heads about vaguely, and mewed.

"Oh, take them away!" cried Edith. "Take them away—they look like some horrid sort of blind rat!"

"But, Edith," Agnes persisted, "those are white princesses! White princesses can't look like rats!"

But just here there was a rush of pattering feet on the piazza, and the White Princess, gaunt and wild-eyed, sprang onto the piazza, seized one of her offspring well around the neck, and made off. This was still more disillusioning, because the white cat seen close to was not the weird animal that we had been accustomed to picture.

No sooner had the cat disappeared than Jimmie, all excitement, joined us. He, too, had some kittens with him.

"The white cat's got kittens up in our barn," he announced. "Here's some of 'em—six, there are!"

Edith sighed wearily. It is hard, when one is sixteen and having one's first callers, to have first one and then another of the small fry interrupt one.

Maria, who had come onto the piazza for a cup of tea, bent over the kittens gingerly.

"Well, Editha," she remarked, "it's as I said! I knew that cat had come to stay—and, of course, now you'd

better get rid of those kittens as quickly as you can. One cat was bad enough, but you know what it would be yourself if there were seven white cats swarming all over us!"

"Get rid of them?" chirped Agnes. "How does one 'get rid' of kittens?"

"Oh," said Maria vaguely, "I suppose you get a man to drown them, or something."

At this a long-drawn wail came from Agnes.

"Oh! Oh!" she yelled, throwing her arms around her cousin Jimmie, who blushed to his ears. "Oh, Jimmie, do you hear what Aunt Maria says? She's going to drown the white princesses. Oh, don't let her drown the white princesses!"

"Hush!" Maria commanded. "Don't make such a noise, Agnes! Kittens are always drowned."

"Oh, no, they're not—no, they're not!" sobbed Agnes. "Else there wouldn't be any cats. Oh, she can't, Aunt Editha, she can't drown the kittens! Oh, she *can't* drown my white princesses!"

"Well, well," said Maria, anxious to cut short the discussion until, as I well knew, she could get me alone, "carry the horrid little things back again, Jimmie and Agnes. At least, we don't need yet to have them sprawling underfoot!"

When I went out to give some orders in the kitchen Seraphy threw at me over her shoulder, from a cake she was stirring up:

"That white cat's got a family of kittens in the barn, the thafe!"

No "White Princess" tales had ever affected Seraphy. To her the white cat had been a "maraudin' baste, snoopin' around" to see what food she could come by unlawfully, and littering up the back kitchen with untidily eaten remnants.

"Let nobody say to me to feed that cat!" continued Seraphy. "I won't be feedin' of her a bite nor sup! 'Tis the bold baste it is, for all its sneakin', quiet ways! We've got lots of trials in life, Mis' Preston, an' have had, what with Jimmie's white mice an' his guinea pigs an' his woodchuck, leave alone Piker

barkin' the ears offen your head; but 'tis like seein' thunderstorms come in th' sky when a white cat gets up in th' barn with a family of kittens."

That evening, as I sat at my west window, I observed two figures, those of Agnes and Jimmie, going down to the barn. In their hands they carried something. I made no doubt that it was food, and I wasn't sorry, because the cat, as she had run past us on the piazza, looked lean and half starved. Later, I glanced out again to see Sraphy hurrying across the lawn with guilty haste. A piled-up plate was in her hands. This was followed five minutes later by my sister's not too slight figure.

Next day, with Agnes, I made a visit to the loft. I noticed no less than six dishes of food standing around. Kitchen cups and breakfast cups, one good china plate; and when I entered the barn the white cat, which, as I have said, had previously been so wild, gingerly sidled up to me, not quite sure whether she should run or make friends. So I suppose I again permitted the "entering wedge" that my sister talks so much about. When a cat walks around you with that air of saying: "Ah, come, let's be friends—I'd be so glad to meet you if I were not afraid that you'd hit or kick me," there's only one thing to do—you speak to it. No one likes the imputation that she would kick a defenseless mother of six children; so I sat down and coaxed and beguiled until the white cat, lured by the food I held—for I forgot to say I had brought her a little something to eat—was sidling around and rubbing herself up and down against Agnes and me as if she had known us for years.

When we inspected the kittens she walked around us with little, anxious, beseeching mews, mingled with her air of pride. You could imagine her saying:

"Oh, yes, they're the finest kittens that I've ever seen or heard of!" And then, her voice rising to a little note of agonized entreaty: "Oh, please, please don't hurt them!"

So, naturally, we had to live up to all

that was expected of us. All she asked was that she and her children shouldn't be hurt. This seemed very little to me; merely to have one's children unmolested, a place to stay in a barn loft, and to show extravagant gratitude for a little food brought one. My heart was touched by the poor White Princess, who was so lean and hungry.

At supper, that night, Maria briskly took up the subject of the kittens.

"What," she wanted to know, "do you intend doing with them, Edith?"

It was Jimmie who answered the question.

"Th' cat's not our cat, an' th' kittens ain't our kittens, an' I don't think anybody's got a right to drown kittens that don't belong to 'em!"

"Well," said Maria, "if any one asks me, all I have to say is that I think it's cruel to let a lot of kittens grow up to be maltreated, perhaps, and perhaps to starve to death. On the other hand, if anybody makes a pet of that cat, the way I can perfectly see all of you doing—Jimmie and Agnes are down there the whole time, and Edith has gone down, too, though she pretended she was going to pick flowers; I saw her from the windows on one side of the house and then from the other. Oh, yes, you did, Edith; you went right down there! We'll have seven cats on our hands, and I think—"

"Nobody's goin' to tame that cat," growled Jimmie. "It's a decent cat; it don't want to be tamed."

"No, of course it won't be tamed," Edith went on. "It's such a nice, prowly cat as it is; and very soon the kittens will all run away."

I tell you this at length so you can see all the machinations of that white cat. At first she had inspired us with romance, in her meteoric, distant flittings about. Next, she inspired us with pity. Next, she worked on us with the distress she found herself in. She was a small cat, and frail looking, and had very pale green, moonstone-like eyes, and she looked up at you with an expression in them that was still like a kitten's—much more innocent than that of most cats.

It wasn't long before hunger and the need of supplying the mouths of those six little creatures brought the white cat up to the back door to be fed. Edith had begun to talk about her again to Agnes, although she had, of course, to drop the romantic "White Princess" idea. She now talked of "the beast of the jungle, whom the kindness of man had made tame—that and hunger." And it *was* rather appealing, to have had this unapproachable, wild creature forget its fear of human beings.

I came into the kitchen in time, one day, to hear Seraphy saying:

"Get out've here, Jimmie and Agnes! If 'twasn't for me th' poor baste'd never get food, so it wouldn't! A hearty meal of victuals is what it needs, th' poor thing! 'Tain't no cat to fend for itself, Jimmie, this cat. 'Tis a poor, strayed house cat, 'tis. Yis, cum up to Seraphy, darlin', ev'ry mornin', an' she'll give ye somethin' better'n th' snips they do be bringin' ye! Cum into th' kitchen', that's right, an' warm yerself —yis." She raised her voice. "An' if Miss Maria sez that ye thrack dirt in me kitchin', I'll tell her that there's manny an' manny a wan puts a dirt-bringin' fut in it—an' me just scrubbin' up th' boards—an' come only f'r snoopin' 'aroun'; an' a clane white cat lyin' out've th' way undther th' stove don't get undther me feet near so much as some I cud mention!"

From this rush of words I retreated, for when Seraphy is in a bellicose humor she storms me under. I took it that she and Maria might have had a brush concerning the white cat's coming up to the house. The creature, you see, had the talent of raising discussion about her. Meek and wan as she was, and humbly grateful as her attitude appeared, yet she set every one by the ears about her. From the very first time she had set upon our barn as a suitable home for raising her children, there had been nothing but dissension concerning her. That was the kind of person she was.

I went down to the barn to see how she was getting on, one day, and found that she had moved her family down-

stairs. She rubbed around me, mewing deprecatingly, as though she wished to say:

"You don't mind my having brought them downstairs—it was so hard jumping upstairs with them again! And they *would* come down. I told them to keep out of the way, but they *would* come down. You know what kittens are!"

It was then I realized that, though we might protest that the white cat wasn't ours, that it had voluntarily come to live in our barn, and that the fate of its kittens was no concern of ours, yet, somehow, by squatter's right, that cat was making herself ours. She had taken up her lodging with us; she depended on us for bread. In spite of oneself, one felt some provision ought to be made for those six kittens, for obviously we couldn't have seven cats on the place.

Soon after this, I was looking out of my window when I saw a procession coming up from the barn. It was the white cat, followed gravely by two of her kittens in single file. Their tottery legs could scarcely bear them, but they held their tiny imitations of tails aloft like their mother.

Maria looked out of the window over my shoulder.

"You see, Editha!" she said darkly. I did see; but I didn't see what could be done about it.

For a week one occasionally saw a white kitten following its mother up to the back doorstep. During this week the kittens began to stray abroad. Indeed, as Maria put it: "It's impossible to walk out in the garden now without finding a lost kitten weeping somewhere!"

This was quite true. Wherever one went one heard piteous mewing. It didn't seem as if only six kittens could get lost in so many different places. Now the yells would come from the middle of the asparagus bed—and as Henry says it's very bad for asparagus to have to extricate kittens from it continually. Again, the cries would come from the cold frame, or one would find a very small, frightened animal in what

seemed to it, no doubt, the vast spaces of the drawing room, weeping bitterly at finding itself in such an unnatural and unhomelike place.

Added to this, the white cat was endlessly chasing up her young, mewing for them, and when she wasn't looking for kittens or sitting on the back doorstep crying aloud that she was hungry—and she was always hungry—she was making life miserable for Piker, Piker, poor dog, speedily got trained so that he had no interest in kittens whatever. He would turn his head in the opposite direction, and insist that he had seen no kittens, never had seen a kitten, didn't want ever to look at a kitten.

After this unsettled time the white cat took a definite stand. She moved her entire family, once and for all, up to the kitchen steps, in the neighborhood of some shrubbery, and sidled up to me, rubbing and mewing and explaining volubly:

"The kittens were always getting lost, you know. I saw what a nuisance it was to you all, so I just moved them up here."

It was that morning that I first looked the white cat in the face and realized what sort of a person she was. No weird White Princess she, no wild beast of the jungle tamed by the kindness of man, not even the humbly grateful animal that she pretended to be. Her humility was a pretense, her gratitude a snare. I realized once and for all that she was one of those pushing, meek women, by nature encroaching, and who, as she crowded you closer and closer to the wall, and took more and more liberties, always put it on some ground of doing a favor to you. First it had been that it was easier for every one if she kept her kittens downstairs instead of in the secluded barn loft. Now it was better for her to bring them up to the back door. I wondered what she'd do next.

I hadn't long to wait. It was soon after this, when we were one evening seated at table, that there came a discreet mew from somewhere. It was the white cat. She had managed to in-

trude herself into the dining room, and appeared now with her discreet and deprecating air.

"Don't mind me!" she seemed to be whining. "I only came in because I seemed in Seraphy's way in the kitchen. I'm so hungry!" This last she drawled out in a voice calculated to break the heart of stone.

Here my spirit asserted itself. I rang the bell to have the cat taken out. I was beginning to have an honest dislike for that animal that I had never felt toward any four-footed creature. Before I could get her out of the room, however, both Jimmie and Agnes had given her things to eat, and Maria surprised me by saying:

"Poor thing, of course she's got to be taken out; but with all those kittens, no wonder she's hungry!"

Our dining room has a number of entrances, and there are long windows, generally open in summer, which give on a piazza. And it was not three minutes after the cat had been removed, via the butler's pantry and kitchen, that she reappeared by the window, waving her tail and arching her back. She sidled up to Maria.

"Poor kitty!" said Maria. And I saw then that Maria had been taken in by the meeching airs of the animal. Of course I had her taken out again, and the windows closed.

Soon after, there was another mew, and the white cat appeared through the front part of the house.

"That cat," I exclaimed, "has spent time in reconnoitering this whole establishment! She knows every door in it!"

"Poor, hungry cat!" said Maria. "I'm sure she doesn't get enough to eat!"

I didn't answer; for well I knew that the "poor hungry cat" was eating all day long, food given her by six members of the family, and food that she stole as well. The kittens had nothing to do with it, I felt assured. She was a natural glutton, as a certain type of hypocritical, blonde woman often is.

From that day it was a standing fight to keep her from the dining room, and no wonder, for when she did appear some one was sure to convey to her a

morsel of food before I could have her sent out.

In the meantime, it seemed to me that there was never a moment when some one didn't come into the room with a white kitten tucked under an arm. Now it was Agnes, now Jimmie, now Edith; or else one of them dragged the white cat along. Under these circumstances, she always had the air of saying: "I don't want to intrude, but they make me come in!"

One morning I was in the library, setting things to rights, when I observed a silent white shadow moving near the curtains. It was the white cat, reconnoitering. She came up to me, mewing, as though she would say:

"If you don't *mind* very much, I think I'll bring the kittens in here." Then, almost tearfully: "I fear I'm in the way of Seraphy out there, and in here I'd be out of the way of everybody."

I know I was quite right in my surmises, for there's no mistaking the air of a cat looking for a home for her children, and I hustled her incontinently out of the house, only to be met by Maria, who said reproachfully:

"How can you treat the cat so, Editha!"

You notice she said *the* cat—our cat!

The bright weather had held for some time, and the cat and her kittens had slept under the stars comfortably enough, ready to make life hideous for Seraphy and the maid as soon as they might appear in the morning, with clamorings for food. But one night it rained—it rained hard. The storm broke after we had all gone to bed. I lay awake, wondering what was happening to that unfortunate animal and her offspring out there with no place of shelter except the small space under the kitchen stoop. Finally I rose, threw on a dressing gown, and went downstairs.

I suppose there is not a mother of a family who could not match me with tales of the things that have happened in the dark watches of the night. How many times in the course of a long life does a family meet hunting for bur-

glars! How many times does one arouse an indignant lord to make him go over the house all in vain! And then perhaps comes the shivering, awful time when the real burglar arrives, and for once you are justified for all the past fruitless nightwalking you have done.

There is a silent, ghostly quality to a sleeping house that I know not how to describe. The familiar aspect of well-known and genial spaces take upon them uncanny airs; curtains turn into white ghosts, chairs and low tables have the aspect of crouched monsters. Then there are all the fearsome noises of the silent house, the little creakings, the almost inaudible whispers, as though in very truth strange creatures move around by night as the ghost stories of our childhood would have us believe. This on quiet nights. But when the wind howls and the rain beats hissing-ly upon the window panes and floods of water drip, drip, drip from the eaves, and vines and trees knock against the windows as though trying to get in away from the storm—a house at night is a fearsome place for an average woman.

I wished that I knew where Piker was so that I could have had him accompany me on my ghostly pilgrimage of mercy. But Piker, of course, was not. The place he always is is where he is not wanted to be. I descended the stairs, went through the hall, through the dining room, through the butler's pantry, and to the silent kitchen; and here I paused, for I had heard a noise and my heart stood still. It was a noise as different from all the other disquieting sounds I have described as is the sound of human speech from the noise of animals.

The noise I had heard was of some one moving. I stood still; there was utter silence except for the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain, and yet I was perfectly sure that another human being was listening for me as I was listening for him.

I tried to stop breathing, feeling sure that the noise of the beating of my heart would betray my whereabouts. Not a sound. I wondered if I could retreat

and get Henry; I wanted to cry out: "Oh, don't shoot!" All the absurd words of panic rose to my throat. Then from out of the darkness came a hideous and awful noise:

"Oh, h-o, h-o, h-o!" it said. "Oh, wourra—wourra—wourra!" The awful shriek of a woman whose nerve is completely gone and upon whom mystery has placed its awful hand. But even while my blood froze within me, my sharpened senses noted that it came from another direction than from where the creature whom I had first heard was lurking.

"Oh, ho, ho, ho!" the voice wailed. "Oh, don't touch me! Oh, keep off me! Oh, wourra, wourra, wourra!"

Without knowing how I did it, I lighted a lamp and there in a state of utter collapse, near the sink, was disclosed to view our second girl; and at the same moment I heard heavy footsteps, and from the gloom of the back kitchen appeared my sister Maria, clothed majestically in her kimono.

"Oh, Mis' Maria," the voice wailed; "oh, Mis' Preston; oh, glory be! It was the cat, bad luck to it! I hears Seraphy movin' round. 'Bad luck from ye,' says I, 'wakin' o' me up!' 'It's goin' to get the cat I am,' says she, 'but now yer awake, go git it yourself, Nora.' Oh, 'tis the hard-hearted one, is Seraphy! 'I gот a cold in me head,' says she, 'and ain't it me own aunt's cousin that ye are, Nora, and half me age.' And what could I be doin'—and when I got down—oh, wourra, I heard a noise!"

Here Nora wept freely.

Maria and I faced each other. She was shaking as with ague, but she managed to ask with some dignity:

"What are you doing in the kitchen at this hour?"

"I might have asked you that question myself, Maria," I responded dryly.

With infinite dignity Maria replied, although she was still shaking:

"I came down, Editha, to let in that poor, unfortunate cat; it's probably drowned by now, and its poor kittens with it!"

"Ach, bad luck to all cats!" came from the prostrate Nora. "'Tis leavin' here to-morrer I am! What with cats and Seraphy, the heart's scalded out of me!"

"There, there, Nora!" I said. "Go up and go to bed."

"Ach, I'll never sleep no more'n my life! And me thinkin' Mis' Maria was a burglar and ye anither burglar, and Seraphy a sendin' o' me adoun the black stairs!"

"Stop that absurd noise, Nora," Maria commanded. "And, Editha, I am chilled to the bone; but I may as well confess that I thought that Nora was a burglar, so I will trouble you please to let that cat in before I get pneumonia. I cannot bear to see poor animals suffer."

So saying, my sister removed herself from the kitchen, and Nora crept, still sobbing, up the back stairs. So it was that the cat made her final entry into my house at the cost of a night's sleep to Maria and me, and a shock to Maria's nervous system, and the loss of an excellent second girl.

So, you see, the cat had her way. Since then, we've never been able to sit down in a chair without looking to see if there's a white kitten in it. Wherever you go in our house now, a small, white creature starts up. The white cat stalks around the house, admiring her young, fawning upon us, and lies prone in a patch of sunlight in Maria's room. As Maria said, seven cats around the house are a good many, but I don't know what is to be done about it. The white cat has come, she and all her progeny, to stay; so that's why I say, beware of all lean, humble women, of whatever species, because there's no standing out against them and their encroaching and meeching ways!





## THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

**S**OLOMON, with ladies gay,  
Had a most engaging way—  
Told a fairy tale, you know,  
How a sprig of mistletoe  
To a family tree would grow.

GEORGE M. RICHARDS.



## What the Editor Has to Say

GENERALLY the story ends with the orange blossoms and the wedding march. Sometimes it takes us a little farther and gives us just a peep at the happy couple, on their honeymoon, at Palm Beach or Niagara Falls, in Southern Europe or in Egypt—it all depends on how much money they happen to have. The long years that come after we must take for granted. We must suppose that misunderstanding and human frailty die in these two, and that the marriage service marks their passing. Have you ever read a really good love story that begins where the others leave off? Is it always true with human beings that the thing possessed loses its interest, and that the real delight is in the pursuit? Is lasting happiness only to be found on that Grecian Urn of Keats on which the swain still pursues and the girl still escapes through centuries of time? Read the complete novel which opens next month's number. There may be some answer for you to some of these questions which have perplexed almost every woman.



THE title is "Journeys' Ends." There is an old song written by a great poet which tells us that "journeys end in lovers' meetings." Anne O'Hagan, who wrote the story, makes this journey of hers start where so many others end, after the wedding. And there is a real love story in it, a real illuminating glimpse into our own hearts and those of the people about us. In her married life, Harriet, who comes

from the South, is unhappy. She is young, and her husband, who is a New Yorker, is young, too. The fact that they are married has wrought no change in their natures, has made them no older. They are still unreasonable and proud at times, misunderstanding follows misunderstanding until the last of all, when they separate. Harriet takes her little girl and wins her own way in the world acting as a social mentor for a girl who needs some one to run her house for her and help her with her questions. And we are going to tell you no more of the story. Don't imagine that because the heroine is a married woman that it is dull, drab, and ordinary in the quality of its emotion. It's just as good a love story, just as new and exciting, as if they were both eighteen and had only known each other two weeks. Life may be finer and brighter, sadder and happier after twenty-five than before. If you don't believe this now, you will in a month when you come to read "Journeys' Ends." It is quite the best story that Anne O'Hagan has ever written for SMITH'S. Think back and remember some of her stories in the past, and you will realize how much this means.



CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS is in London at the present writing. He went there with the purpose of giving a series of readings, and arrived just in time to see the funeral of Edward the Seventh and the proclamation of the present king. He might have been more properly im-

pressed with the beauty and historic significance of these pageants had he not suffered a very narrow escape of being crushed to death by the assembled British multitude. Save in his mental and spiritual attributes, Loomis is not what is generally regarded as a large man. There was a large percentage of big and physically forcible people in the crowd, and the crowd, according to Loomis, was one of the largest and most densely packed that has ever been witnessed since the time when the Asiatic hordes of Ghengis Khan poured into Europe in numbers greater than the sands of the sea. Loomis, in having the experience of his life, very nearly lost it. He will tell you something about it in his message to you next month. He calls his sermon "Imaginary Evils." You'll find out what the title means when you read it and not before.

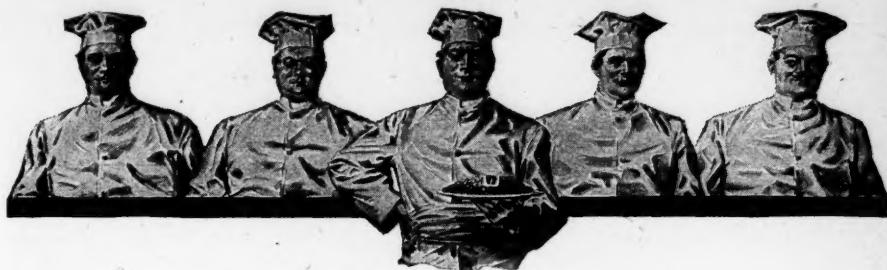
Juan. And then Romance gets busy! Read the story and find out what happens.

**A S IT WAS RECORDED**, by W. B. M. Ferguson, isn't a funny story at all. It is sad enough and grim enough to make you think, but still it is pleasant reading and leaves no bad after taste. When you go shopping you may feel scant sympathy for the young person who doesn't wait on you as promptly as she might and whose conversation is pert rather than helpful in its general tone. You don't realize perhaps how dull a life hers is, how tiresome with drudgery, how filled with insidious temptation. Ferguson's story may help you to see a little of the shop girl's side of it, to show you a little of her heart and mind, to make you like her a little better.

**J**UST as a contrast to the complete novel by Anne O'Hagan, which is about people supposedly through with love affairs and safely married, there is a funny little story by Edith Summers Updegraff about two girls who are too young to be in love, much less get married. It is called "Romance in a Restaurant." For boys there is an awkward age, and for girls there is a silly one, and Miss Updegraff's young ladies are in the very heyday of the latter period. If you have ever passed through this attractive phase of existence you probably fail to realize how ridiculous you were at the time. Miss Updegraff will help you to see a little of your younger self as well as the girls she tells about. The world of romance is thrown wide open to one heroine when she gets permission from her mother to eat her luncheon in a restaurant in the middle of the day. She goes to school, you see, and it is too far to go home for lunch, and cold lunches are not the best thing in the world for growing girls. For the other budding heroine of fiction there is a drug-store clerk who draws soda water with all the mysterious grace of a Don

**W**ERTER D. DODD has written a splendid Western story for the October number of SMITH'S. It is called "A Golden Accident." There are half a dozen girls in it, one man, a meeting of childhood friends, and a life-sized gold mine. It isn't a funny story or a psychological study or a sad story or anything else, but just an unusually good story.

**R**ULE, BRITANNIA! is the title of another Western story of a different sort in the October SMITH'S. It is by Edward Boltwood, and is funny all the way through. In it you will find a Western ranchman who, to help a friend in his love affairs, tries to pose as a traveling Englishman. What he doesn't know about England and the English would fill more than one issue of this magazine, but the amount of earnest effort and thoroughpaced mendacity he brings to his task is worthy of a better cause. Then, in addition to this and other things, such as a story by Holman F. Day and a funny poem by Wallace Irwin, there's a big installment of Rupert Hughes' great serial, "The Gift-Wife."



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# September Ainslee's

"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

The September number of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will have a table of contents of a good deal more than ordinary interest. Once before this year the magazine has presented its readers with an unprecedented array of notable contributors, and you will find another in September.

At the head of the list is

## BOOTH TARKINGTON AND HARRY LEON WILSON

The complete novel, "*Foreign Exchange*," is their latest production. It is a story of the present day, and has the sort of dramatic interest that holds attention from beginning to end.

## ANTHONY PARTRIDGE'S

serial, "*The Golden Web*," is continued, and it grows more absorbing with every chapter. It is one of the most successful serials of the year.

Among the contributors of short stories there will be H. F. Prevost Battersby, who, by-the-way, can be found only in AINSLEE'S; Anne Warner, whose early successes were made with us; Ethel Watts Mumford, Margaret Busbee Shipp, Mrs. W. K. Clifford, Owen Oliver, Margaretta Tuttle, Jane W. Guthrie, Charles Neville Buck and Carey Waddell.

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## ONCE RICH, BUT DIED POOR

### Former Banker and Mayor Ended Life as a Garbage Burner.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Feb. 21.—Martin L. Sweet, former banker and prominent business man, and once Mayor of Grand Rapids, died suddenly today, on the 86th anniversary of his birth.

Mr. Sweet, who had been prominent in the milling and elevator business of the State, built Sweet's hotel here, founded the bank now known as the Old National Bank and at one time had large lumber interests. Unfortunate operations, however, swept his fortune away and at the time of his death he was employed at the city garbage incinerating plant at a small salary.

*"Of all sad things of tongue or pen,  
the saddest are these, it might have  
been."* Carlton.

Had this man at age 60 invested \$10,000. in an ANNUITY in the National Life Insurance Company, he would have enjoyed, during every year of the remainder of his life, an annual income of \$944.90 and have received for the \$10,000. invested a total sum of \$24,567.40.

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# A SEASON AHEAD

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The most striking story printed anywhere in five years

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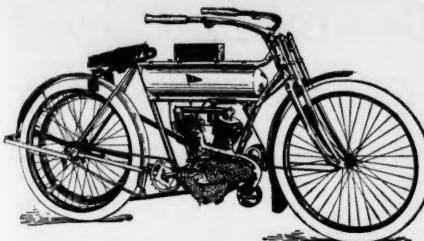
And a red-blooded, virile romance of the South Seas

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### THE EVER-CONSISTENT YALE

Nichols, one of the three Yale riders in the 375 Mile Endurance Contest held by the New Jersey Motorcycle Club May 30-31, 1910, was awarded the *Silver Trophy Cup* for the most consistent performance of the 65 contestants. The Yale team—as usual—achieved a perfect score.

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